



IN THE TABLOID
**THE PRINCESS
AND THE
PLAYBOY**



IN THE TABLOID: STYLE
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WITH THE
FASHION PACK**



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Soccer stars cleared over match fixing charges

Michael Streeter

The football authorities last night announced a high-powered inquiry into betting and match forecasting in the game after a jury cleared four defendants, including footballers John Fashanu and Bruce Grobbelaar, of a conspiracy to fix Premier League matches.

As three of the accused walked free - Grobbelaar, the former Liverpool goalkeeper, still faces a separate match throwing charge - it was announced that the former Deputy Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Sir John Smith, had already started the urgent investigation.

David Davies, the Football Association's public affairs spokesman said: "Sir John will be reporting speedily - certainly within three months - to the chief executive."

The verdict - in a 45-day trial after another jury failed to agree earlier this year - had come as a huge relief for the football authorities after the match-fixing allegations had threatened to engulf the sport in its worst scandal this century.

The jury of six women and five men at Winchester Crown Court found Fashanu, 34, who used to play for Wimbledon, Grobbelaar, 39, ex-Wimbledon goalkeeper Hans Segers, 35, and Malaysian businessman Heng Suan Lim, 32, not guilty of conspiracy to give and accept corrupt payments to influence the results of football matches on behalf of a Far Eastern betting syndicate. The jury accepted the defendants' claims they were involved in match forecasting, not fixing.

It will continue its deliberations this morning on whether Grobbelaar is guilty of accepting £22,000 from his former business partner, Christopher Vincent, to fix matches for a separate - and fictional - syndicate.



Hans Segers and wife Astrid (top) celebrate yesterday. He was cleared of all charges in the match-fixing trial. Ex-Aston Villa player John Fashanu (above) kisses his wife, Melissa.
Photographs: Mike Stephens/PA, Kieran Doherty/Routers

The fourth mortgage rise under Labour

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

Home-buyers face the fourth increase since the general election in the cost of mortgages after the Bank of England announced a quarter point increase in interest rates to 7 per cent yesterday.

Employers' organisations and trade unions spoke with one voice in condemning the Bank's move, saying that high interest rates were keeping the pound too strong and damaging industry.

"This is the last thing Britain's exporters and their suppliers need at this time," said Ian Peters, of the British Chambers of Commerce, describing the decision as a "body-blow".

The foreign exchange and stock markets, however, responded positively to a strong hint in the statement from the Monetary Policy Committee that there would be no more interest rate rises in the near future. They fell sharply on the foreign exchanges, leading to a 10 pence drop against the German mark in two days.

The financial markets were delighted that the Bank had managed to trim the exchange rate, sending share prices leaping to another new record yesterday. The FTSE 100 index climbed 61 points to 5,086.8, and has gained 14 per cent since the election. "The Bank of England is to be commended for some pretty nifty footwork here," said Roger Bootle, chief economist at City of London bank HSBC Markets.

The Bank's statement yesterday said: "Upward pressure on the exchange rate should be reduced by the perception that

The cost to mortgages

Increases in repayments on a variable rate mortgage since the general election.

Mortgage	1 May	today
25%	725%	845%
£50,000	£384.46	£373.77
£100,000	£768.92	£747.54
£150,000	£1,153.38	£1,121.31
£200,000	£1,537.84	£1,494.75

interest rates have reached a level consistent with the inflation target."

It acknowledged that the strong pound had put exporters under "severe pressure". The unexpectedly clear signal led some City experts to predict that interest rates will not need to climb any higher unless there was new evidence of the consumer boom picking up more steam.

Despite the success of the Bank's efforts to weaken the pound, it came in for harsh criticism. Kate Barker, chief economist of the Confederation of British Industry, said: "The CBI is unhappy about this fourth successive interest rate increase."

Brendan Barber, deputy general secretary of the TUC, said: "Higher interest rates will do nothing to encourage industry to invest in skills and new capacity."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer did not escape attack.

His shadow, Peter Lilley, said: "The fourth rate rise in 100 days is the inevitable result of Chancellor Gordon Brown's botched Budget." He said Mr Brown had "left the Bank with no option but to push interest rates higher."

Malcolm Bruce, Treasury spokesman for the Liberal Democrats, joined him in criticising the Budget. "Today's interest rate rise was probably necessary to avoid a damaging consumer boom followed by the usual bust, but it was also a sign that Gordon Brown got his Budget wrong," he said.

A Labour backbencher, Austin Mitchell, urged the Chancellor to reverse his "premature" decision to allow the Bank of England to set interest rates. He said its Monetary Policy Committee had "turned a complacent blind eye to Britain's slide into the third recession since 1979".

Interest rates have now risen by 1 per cent since 1 May. The Cheltenham & Gloucester, the fourth biggest lender, raised its mortgage rates straight away. Other big lenders, including the Halifax, Woolwich, Abbey National, Alliance & Leicester and Nationwide, said they would review the situation.

The Britannia increased its savings rates, but said its mortgage rates would not rise.

City delight, page 19

How a five-year-old boy ended up as the victim of one town's drug-fuelled amorality

Steve Boggan

This is five-year-old Dillon Hull, the youngest victim of Britain's spiralling descent into drug-fuelled amorality, a child so at risk that his stepfather tried to buy bullet-proof glass for his home just hours before a gunman fired two shots into the little boy's head.

As Dillon's neighbours in Deane, a once-proud suburb of Bolton, Greater Manchester, tried to come to terms with their new membership of gangster land, details emerged yesterday of the adult forces that had conspired to end his young life.

Dillon died on Wednesday evening because he got in the way of a crash-helmeted gunman apparently intent on settling a feud with his stepfather, John Bates, a 28-year-old with a record for possession who regularly came to the attention of police.

Armed officers were guarding Mr Bates at a secret location last night after witnesses came forward to say that he may know the identity of the man who killed Dillon and shot him in the stomach. His injuries are not life-threatening.

A firm of glaziers have told police that they were called on Wednesday morning to replace a window at Mr Bates' home in Jauncey Street which had been damaged by gunfire in the early hours.

"He asked whether we could supply bullet-resistant glass but we said his window was too large, so we sent laminated glass, the strongest we had," said Alan Moores, manager of Express Glaze in Ashton-under-Lyne. "When my lads got there, Mr Bates showed them a bullet hole in his living room wall and said: 'I know who did this - and I'm going to get him.' My lads got the job done as quickly as they could and got the hell out of there."

Later that afternoon, shortly after 5pm, the gunman struck, shooting his victims in Bankfield Street in broad daylight. He then ran down an alley leaving a yellow Mini Metro behind.

Yesterday police said there was "no big drugs war in Bolton", but neighbours spoke of "rife" drug dealing in an area that used to be quiet and respectable.

In a clear sign that police may have been given a name by Mr Bates, Detective Superintendent Peter Ellis, the man leading the inquiry, said he had reason to believe the gunman was being harboured by other criminals and



Dillon Hull was a friendly, sociable, intelligent child, said neighbours.

he appealed for them to turn him in. "Whatever activity or business these people are in, I would ask them: 'Where do you draw the line?' A five-year-old boy's life has been stolen away; he has been brutally murdered on the streets of Bolton," he said. "Please call me in confidence and help me catch this killer."

Mr Ellis said the car driven by the assailant and a crash-helmet he discarded at the scene were being examined by forensic scientists. The Metro had not been stolen, he said, but the previous owner had been eliminated from the inquiry. The car had changed hands seven times in recent weeks. Mr Ellis also revealed that closed-circuit television footage from nearby commercial premises was also being examined.

Neighbours described Dillon as a friendly, sociable and intelligent child, to whom his mother, Jane Hull - who gave birth to a baby boy three days ago - was devoted. Mr Ellis said Mr Bates was "known to police" and had been visited by officers on several occasions because of complaints by neighbours.

According to the Manchester Evening News, he had been convicted of possessing drugs and had been arrested more than once in connection with alleged intent to supply. Police refuse to discuss his antecedents.

In spite of his turbulent life, Mr Bates comes from a respectable, wealthy family. His father, Johnny, is well known locally as the proprietor of two large greengrocers. The family

home is a large red-brick detached house set back from Bury Old Road in Ainsworth.

The Bates' declined to comment last night, but a family acquaintance said: "John doesn't get on with his father. A few years ago, Johnny disowned him because of his behaviour. I don't know what will happen to their relationship after this."

The streets of Deane were quiet yesterday, its residents shocked. Although smart by the standards of inner-city drug dealing areas, people spoke of known drug dens, all-night police patrols and fears of walking out at night.

At the end of Bankfield Street, flowers and wreaths were laid in memory of Dillon. "One of God's children brutally murdered," said one. Another, from a young friend read: "Sweet dreams, Power Ranger. RIP."

Mothers were keeping a tight rein on their children last night. "My daughter, Kirsty, used to play with Dillon," said Marie Butler, 25. "Thank God, she's away at the moment."

"When she comes back, I'm going to tell her he's in Heaven with the angels. I mean, how do you explain to a seven-year-old about grown-ups, and guns, and drugs."



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SEPTEMBER ISSUE OUT NOW



32 QUICKLY

Silver for Jackson
Colin Jackson took the silver medal in the 110 metres hurdles final at the World Athletics Championships in Athens last night Page 28

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Blair plans end-of-year assessment of Government

Tony Blair is planning to follow today's assessment of Labour's first 100 days in office with an annual report on the performance of the Government next May on the anniversary of the general election.

Denying it may copy the US President's "State of the Nation" address, Downing Street officials said it would take the form of a company chief executive's report to the shareholders, with a check on the 10 main manifesto commitments, including smaller class sizes.

John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, and Peter Mandelson, minister without portfolio, will today highlight the achievements of the Government's first 100 days.

Colin Brown

'Smart phones' to curb jail stalkers

The introduction of "smart telephones" in prisons to stop offenders stalking their victims while they are behind bars will be announced today by the Government.

Joyce Quin, the prisons and probation minister, will announce a comprehensive extension of a scheme to combat the use of telephones by inmates to stalk their victims with nuisance calls. The "smart telephone" technology will limit the prisoners to access to telephone numbers which have been approved by the authorities.

No slim-pill death link, says coroner

A husband's fight to link his wife's death with slimming pills failed yesterday. John Ellis, 44, had fought for more than a year to have an inquest held into the death of his 48-year-old wife Jennifer. Mrs Ellis, a clerical assistant, from Acomb, York, died from a brain haemorrhage in hospital on 22 March 1996. Unknown to her husband, she had been taking the slimming drug Phentermine, prescribed by a private slimming clinic, on and off for the past seven years.

Her death was at first treated as natural and no inquest was held. But after representations from Mr Ellis's lawyers, York coroner Donald Coverdale agreed to hold the inquest. Mr Coverdale yesterday recorded a verdict of death by natural causes. Expert witness, Dr Peter Kopelman, told the hearing there was no evidence of the slimming drug being linked to brain haemorrhages.

BBC celebrates daytime revival



BBC chiefs are celebrating a daytime TV ratings turnaround after ditching their "sofa celebrities" Nick Owen and Anne Diamond last year.

The *Good Morning With Anne and Nick* stars were dropped after ITV's Richard and Judy became runaway successes, with almost double the audience for their *This Morning* show. Richard Madeley and Judy Finnigan accused their rivals of copying them and claimed they deserved to fail. Diamond (pictured) and Owen were

dropped last May, with Diamond refusing to accept a bouquet of flowers sent by BBC Controller Alan Yentob, now Director of Television. But BBC1 daytime ratings have now moved back into contention and are neck-and-neck with ITV.

Seaweed on designer dinner menu

Seaweed, redolent with memories of seaside holidays and apparently better for you than ice cream and candy floss, is bidding to become the next designer ingredient for the country's dinner tables.

Two varieties, sea lettuce and dulse, are going on sale at Tesco, and are recommended for an extra kick in dishes ranging from pasta and chicken to scrambled egg.

Sea lettuce, delicate green and feathery, is said to be good for wrapping fish and meat during cooking – or eating as a salad in a marinade of lemon juice and olive oil.

Dulse, which comes in rich red ribbons, is recommended for enhancing pasta dishes, soups, salads and "works particularly well" with chicken, according to Tesco.

Lord Sutch sees off second party

The Monster Raving Loony Party candidate, Screaming Lord Sutch, may have claimed another scalp after the announcement yesterday by Alan Sked that he was retiring as the leader of the anti-EU UK Independence Party.

Mr Sked, an academic who founded the party in 1993, said work pressure had forced a return to his "ivory tower" at the London School of Economics.

It follows his party's poor showing in the Uxbridge by-election in which the UK Independence Party was beaten by Lord Sutch. David Owen would up the SDP after his party was humiliated in a by-election by being beaten by a Monster Raving Loony candidate.

Colin Brown

'This bear is not miserable – official'

London Zoo has had to erect signs to reassure worried visitors that a depressed looking bear is perfectly happy.

Lanka, a 14-year-old sloth bear from South Asia, has been displaying worrying behaviour since her move to London from Warsaw Zoo three months ago.

She rocks from side to side in a motion that some animal experts have described as a classic sign of boredom.

But keepers have moved to dispel the worries of people viewing this strange spectacle by putting up signs around her two acre enclosure.

The sign states: "You may have noticed that the female sloth bear sometimes displays an abnormal 'rocking' behaviour in front of doors. The keepers are trying to cure this with a wide variety of behavioural enrichment ideas".

people



PW Botha with his wife Elize who died two months ago. Inset: New love Renette Naude

South Africa's old president follows Mandela's love lines

White or black, racist or freedom fighter: what is the secret of the ageing South African politician?

A year ago, President Nelson Mandela, 79, and Mozambique's Graca Machel, 28 years his junior, confirmed breathless rumours of romance by canoeing during a presidential trip to Europe.

Now the hero's one-time arch-enemy, the former state president PW Botha, 81, is said to be in love with Renette Naude, a widow almost half his age. While Paris was the setting for the outing of Mr Mandela and Ms Machel, a town called Wilderness – to which the bitter PW retreated in 1989 after being knifed by his cabinet – is apparently the backdrop for this very Afrikaner romance.

Yesterday Mr Botha denied he planned to marry Ms Naude, the vivacious blonde owner of an upmarket guest house. But then he also played the never realised his security police murdered and maimed to keep him in power. "At the moment I am a handsome warrior," growled the *Groot Krokoddil* (Great Crocodile), as he

is affectionately known. But Mr Botha was fulsome in his praise of Ms Naude and while the lady herself denied marriage was imminent she did not rule it out later.

If the couple do indeed have plans to marry their coyness is understandable. Elize, Mr Botha's wife of 54 years, only died in June. Yesterday the old joke about Afrikaner funerals was doing the rounds: however grief-stricken the widower, he always takes time to eye up the mourners.

Somehow its easier to imagine President Mandela, the world's most popular politician, as a romantic hero than the finger-wagging, stalk-eyed PW Botha.

But each to their own. President Mandela picked a woman with impeccable revolutionary credentials; Ms Naude is said to be a devout member of the local Afrikaner church.

And as Mr Botha pointed out yesterday: "The Bible says it is not good to be alone."

Mary Braid — Johannesburg

Albert Hall chief quits in shock move

Patrick Deuchar has resigned as chief executive of the Royal Albert Hall in London. The resignation shocked associates as Mr Deuchar, who has been at the Hall for eight years, has recently won £40m of lottery money to fulfil his dream of opening up the Hall in the daytime with a cafe, art gallery and entertainments on site.

Mr Deuchar (right) recently married the musicals star Liz Robertson, who made her name as Eliza Doolittle in *My Fair Lady* on the West End stage. Professionally, too, he has been celebrating with the RAH co-producing a number of extravaganzas including the ballet *Swan Lake*, arena operas and the *Cirque du Soleil*.

As chief executive, Mr Deuchar was a firm manager who made numerous personnel changes when he arrived eight years ago. He had a high personal profile, and made a point of promoting the Royal Albert Hall as a national treasure, "the nation's village hall", and widening the Hall's use from the Proms, popular classics and Eric Clapton, to embrace circus for the first time, arena



opera and latterly arena ballet. There had been reports that he had not always seen eye to eye with his trustees in recent months, but these were sharply denied by spokespeople at the Hall yesterday. Eve Hewitt, director of sales at the Royal Albert Hall, confirmed that Mr Deuchar had resigned, saying he was leaving "to pursue other interests."

But she said there had been no falling out at all between Mr Deuchar and the trustees.

Raymond Gubby, the concert promoter who presents 50 shows a year at the RAH, said last night: "I am deeply sad that he is going. Patrick has done an incredible job in revitalising the Hall."

David Lister

Britain's oldest man dies at 109

Britain's oldest man has died in hospital aged 109.

Vinson Gulliver, who earned a place in the Guinness Book of Records, died peacefully of "old age", his only daughter, Doreen Jackson, said.

The former train driver – who was born one of 13 children in November 1887, when Queen Victoria was celebrating her golden jubilee – remained alert almost until his death at 8pm on Tuesday in the Wythenshawe Hospital, Manchester.

"He'd enjoyed his life but he said he was quite ready to go and in the end he just drifted off," said 66-year-old Mrs Jackson.

A Guinness Book of Records spokesman said the title of Britain's oldest living man was now open. "We are looking at a number of candidates aged around 107 but we will not know until all their documentation has been checked," he said.

Lucy Askew of Buckhurst Hill, Essex is Britain's oldest living person. She is due to celebrate her 114th birthday in September.

Mr Gulliver's death follows the death on Monday of the oldest person in the world, Frenchwoman Jeanne Calment, who was aged 122 years and 153 days.

Kiss-and-sell frenzy over Diana photographs

A bidding war has broken out in Paris over what have been touted as "sizzling" new photographs of Diana, Princess of Wales, in the company of her latest male friend, the Harolds heir Dodi Fayed.

Mr Fayed, 41, accompanied the princess on a secret yachting holiday in the Mediterranean, and pictures showing them "kissing and cuddling" are being offered for around £500,000. William Hill has cut the odds on the Princess remarrying before 2000, from 6/4 to even money. But today, in her role as "princess

of compassion", Diana was flying to Bosnia as part of her worldwide campaign against landmines.

Dodi al Fayed, the 41-year-old son of Mohamed al Fayed and nephew of arms dealer Adnan Khashoggi, has been linked over the years with a string of beautiful women. An Oscar-winning film producer, his credits include *Chariots of Fire*, *Breaking Glass*, *Murder By Fire* and *Hook*.

His marriage to American model Suzanne Gregard ended in divorce after eight months, with a settlement

rumoured to be \$2m (£1.3m), including jewellery and a new Rolls Royce car. Afterwards he said: "I think my one marriage has put me off the institution for life."

He has been linked with a string of actresses, including Brooke Shields, the Duke of York's former girlfriend, Koo Stark, Britt Ekland, Princess Stephanie of Monaco, the actress Valerie Perrine, and Frank Sinatra's daughter, Tina.

More recently he was reported to be comforting Joanna Whalley following her break-up with Val Kilmer.

Ian Burrell

briefing

SOCIAL POLICY

Drug experts warn against appointing 'gung-ho czar'

Experts warned the Government today not to turn its new drug czar into a vote-catching "gung-ho" general.

They said the policy could backfire if enforcement was over-emphasised at the expense of treatment, rehabilitation and prevention.

The four drugs experts, writing in the *British Medical Journal*, warned of the dangers of "war" rhetoric. They were disappointed that the drug czar had been charged with leading "the battle against drugs", and unhappy about the US being chosen as a role model. "The macho nature of the post is further signalled by its title – no czarina need apply," they wrote. The experts were led by John Strang, director of the National Addiction Centre, London. His co-authors were William Clee, chairman of the Welsh Advisory Committee on Drug and Alcohol Misuse, Lawrence Gruer, a consultant in public health medicine from Glasgow, and Duncan Raistrick, director of the Leeds Addiction Unit.

The role of the drug czar – whose proper title is UK Anti-drugs Co-ordinator – will be to take an overview of strategies to combat substance abuse and make recommendations to the Government. Applications for the post must be in by 5 September.

MOTORING

Car security still not up to scratch

Nearly 90 per cent of cars can be broken into within two minutes and are therefore failing Home Office vehicle safety requirements, according to test results released yesterday.

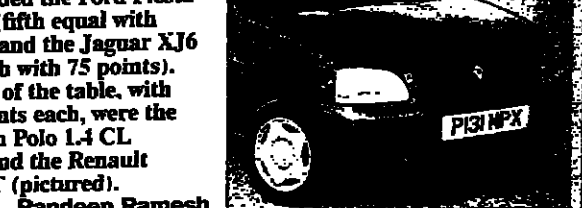
But British cars are the most secure on the market and come closest to satisfying Home Office guidelines, the tests conducted by *What Car?* magazine disclosed.

Of the 72 models subjected to break-in and drive-away tests, 64 could be broken into within two minutes – and some in a matter of seconds. Home Office guidelines say cars must resist attempts to drive them away for a further five minutes after being broken into. A total of 61 per cent of the 72 cars passed this five-minute test – 3 per cent more than last year's figure.

In an overall security league table compiled from the test results, the Jaguar XK8 and the Range Rover 4.0 SE were joint top, with 90 out of a maximum 100 points.

These were two of the eight cars that passed both break-in and drive-away tests. The eight included the Ford Fiesta 1.25 Ghia (fifth equal with 80 points) and the Jaguar XJ6 3.2 (seventh with 75 points).

At the foot of the table, with just 10 points each, were the Volkswagen Polo 1.4 CL five-door and the Renault Clio 1.4 RT (pictured).



Randeep Ramesh

EDUCATION

Media 'stigmatising mental illness'

National newspapers are "feeding [the] mental health stigma" said health experts yesterday as they launched an initiative to promote respect for those with mental health problems.

A survey of more than 1,000 articles carried out by the Health Education Authority in association with Mind found that almost half press coverage is about crime, harm to others and self-harm with both broadsheets and tabloids making a link between mental ill health and violence. More than 40 per cent of tabloid articles about mental health carried pejorative words such as "nutter" or "loony" and reports containing advice and guidance accounted for less than 8 per cent of all the coverage.

The HEA and Mind, backed by the National Union of Journalists and the Press Complaints Commission, are calling for more balanced coverage. The survey was published the day the two organisations started targeting 16 to 24-year-olds, who together with the over-75s are the most prejudiced about mental illness in a new nationwide scheme. Dr Lynne Friedli, manager of the HEA's mental health project, said: "Greater understanding is crucial to increase respect for people experiencing mental health problems – which could be any one of us at some time in our lives."

Glenda Cooper

SCIENCE

Fly may hold key to human condition

Do you enjoy dining out, far from the reach of home cooking? The reason could be genetic, especially if you happen to be a fruit fly, researchers reported yesterday.

A single gene appears to determine whether fruit flies – and possibly mammals, including humans – like to forage for food by away or prefer eating close to home, according to Maria Sokolowski, a biologist at York University in Toronto.

The fruit fly world is divided into two distinct types, rovers and sitters. Ms Sokolowski and colleagues wrote in this week's edition of the *Journal Science*. Rovers are willing to travel farther for food than the sitters, but both types will roam if food supplies are scarce enough. And rovers will stay home to eat if conditions are right. The genetic basis of the trait means this is a true bimorphism: flies fall into one or the other category, with none who sometimes rove and sometimes sit. Rovers can be turned into sitters only with genetic intervention or drastic measures such as application of gamma radiation, which causes the gene to mutate. The chance that humans have a similar gene is quite good, Ms Sokolowski said.

HEALTH

Epidemic of obesity feared

A global epidemic of obesity threatens to place an impossible burden on health care systems around the world, in both rich and poor countries, a leading expert warned today.

One in five middle-aged adults in Europe were sufficiently overweight to be considered obese and the situation is even worse in the US and eastern Europe where it afflicted as many as half of middle-aged women. Obesity was also rising in the developing nations of South America, the Caribbean and Asia, while in some American Indian tribes and Polynesian races it affected almost 80 per cent of the population.

Writing in the *Lancet*, Professor Per Bjorntorp, from the Department of Heart and Lung Diseases at the University of Gothenburg, said: "These frequencies mean that countries such as the UK, France and Germany each have 5-10 million inhabitants who are obese and need treatment. A medical problem of this size is probably beyond the capacity of even the best health care system."

Glenda Cooper



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سكرا من الاصل

First of all there was Shopping and F***ing. Then God came along

Clare Garner

After a season of *Shopping and F***ing*, what better antidote than a blast of the Bible? From tonight there will be no more explicit sexual performances in the West End's Gielgud Theatre. In their place will be revelations of a different kind in a 100-minute staging of the Old and New Testaments.

"The Bible's come along to cleanse the theatre," said Mark Goucher, who co-produced both Mark Ravenhill's *Shopping and F***ing* and the Reduced Shakespeare Company's *The Bible: The Complete Word of God* (abridged).

'One cleric from Poole was so concerned that he told his congregation to pray that the troupe would not make it to Dorset'

The owners of the theatre refused to stage the one play without the other. "They allowed us to bring *Shopping and F***ing* in provided we brought *The Bible* in afterwards," said Mr Goucher.

"They thought *The Bible* would be more commercially successful than *Shopping and F***ing* would ever be, so we tied up the two."

But Nica Bruns, production director of Stoll Moss Theatre, which owns a dozen West End theatres, insists there was "no irony intended" in the two-play deal. None the less, she hopes *The Bible* will capitalise on the "young, hip audience" which was attracted by its predecessor. "The perception of

Shaftesbury Avenue has been changed for ever by the lively audiences and writing of *Shopping and F***ing*. We hope *The Bible* continues in this vein."

Although the new play, which romps "from fig leaves to final judgement" in one hour and 40 minutes with a readymade interval between the two testaments, is less explicit than *Shopping and F***ing*, it has its fair share of "begging and bawling", according to Reed Martin, co-scriptwriter and actor.

"We tried to cut out all the unimportant bits and minor characters and get to the sex and killing. We're just trying to put the fun back into fundamentalism."

The irreverent approach to the Word of the Lord has stirred fears in some clergy that the show will be the next *Life of Brian*.

One outraged cleric from Poole was so concerned when the play went on tour that he told his congregation to pray that the troupe would not make it to Dorset. The script writers insist that the play is not blasphemous and point out that it went down a treat in Jerusalem.

Neither play, however, could be described as standard West End fare. Both are being hailed, along with Ben Elton's *Popcorn* next door in the Apollo Theatre, as a means of weaning the next generation of theatregoers painlessly into the West End.

Forty per cent of *Shopping and F***ing*'s audience was under 25 and the average age for *Popcorn* is 35. The Reduced Shakespeare Company's audiences are predominantly young too.

Mr Goucher is delighted with the success of *Shopping and F***ing*, which sold out every night, and the fact that the Reduced Shakespeare Company now has three plays running in London simultaneously.

"The West End has that myth



God slot: The Reduced Shakespeare Company's latest iconoclastic blast compresses the Old and New Testaments into a performance of less than two hours, romping from 'fig leaves to final judgement'

that it's very difficult to make new controversial plays work there, but there's a massive, young, trendy audience out there," he said. "It's that new audience that everyone desperately wants to get into the West End to ensure its survival."

The Reduced Shakespeare Company's other plays, *The Complete Works of Shakespeare* (abridged) and *The Complete History of America* (abridged), both running at The Criterion Theatre, are attracting a predominantly young audience too. The producers of *The Bible* are confident that their latest show will do the same.

The Reduced Shakespeare Company considers *The Bible* to

be "the perfect addition" to its repertoire.

"It's long, internationally known, packed with sex and violence and, most importantly, these three cultural apostles cannot be sued by the original authors," said a spokeswoman.

"After unceasing and diligent research they are now able to reveal the answers to questions that have baffled theological scholars for centuries such as: 'Did Adam and Eve have navels?' and 'Did Moses really look like Charlton Heston?'"

The Bible runs at the Gielgud Theatre from 8 August to 1 November.

Mystery of attack on Avon Lady

Alexandra Williams

A widow heard yesterday how her husband died while subjecting a woman to a terrifying attack in her own home. The inquest into the death of David Stuchbery was told how he died from a single stab wound on February 4th, as he attacked Avon saleswoman Wendy Hertz in her own home.

Mrs Hertz, 36, described her horrific ordeal, which left her mentally and physically scarred.

She said that on the morning of February 4th she answered her front door to Stuchbery. Recognising him as a customer of hers, the Avon lady invited him to step inside her house from the cold while she went to get him a catalogue.

But Stuchbery came inside and she saw he was holding a knife. "His eyes grew wide. He was stone-faced. He raised his left arm across my chest. I could feel his breath on my face. I know the knife was very close to my neck and he was just staring at my face."

"I asked 'Why are you doing this?' Slowly and mechanically, he said: 'I don't know,'" she said.

Mrs Hertz screamed as Stuchbery pushed her head back and tried to kiss her. "He unzipped my jeans and he started to pull them off. It was then I was able to pick up the knife."

Although Mrs Hertz managed to grab the knife, having been cut she could not grip it properly. Her attacker, who had been drinking alcohol, pushed her onto the stairs and shouted: "You're going to get it. You're going to get it."

Mrs Hertz does not recall stabbing Stuchbery. The next thing she remembers is her attacker lying face down in the hallway. Terrified that he would



Wendy Hertz: Left scarred

suddenly pounce on her again she reached for a bottle and hit him on the head, before running out of her house to her next-door neighbours.

Police found blood smeared on the walls and the flick-knife, used by Mr Stuchbery's wife to gut fish, lying in the corridor.

Detective Inspector Alan Scott, the investigating officer, said: "On that morning Mr Stuchbery went out with the specific intention of carrying out a serious sexual offence on Mrs Hertz. He knew that if Mrs Hertz had survived she would have had no difficulty in identifying him. It is my opinion that had he not died, he would not have let her survive."

The court heard how Stuchbery, a 49-year-old road sweeper, was shy and found it hard to make friends, but had been happily married to his wife Linda, a primary school Head Mistress. Mrs Stuchbery, her voice trembling, said: "What David did was wholly out of character, very unexpected and very tragic. I cannot offer an explanation. He just seemed to snap."

The coroner recorded a verdict of accidental death.

Ship's captain jailed over crew's death on the rocks

Kim Sengupta and Louise Hancock

The skipper of the shipwrecked *Maria Asumpta*, the world's oldest sailing vessel, was jailed for 18 months yesterday after being convicted of manslaughter over the deaths of three crew members.

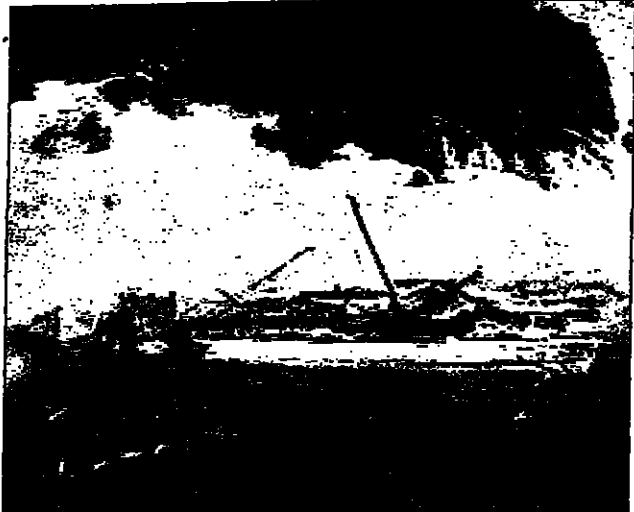
Former Royal Navy lieutenant Mark Litchfield, 56, was found guilty on a majority decision at Exeter Crown Court after a five-week trial which followed the loss of the square-rigger on the north Cornwall coast.

Mr Justice Butterfield, the presiding judge, had told the jurors that to return a manslaughter verdict they had to be sure Litchfield, who also owned the ship, was grossly negligent in breaching a duty he had to take reasonable care of his crew.

The judge said it was his duty to sentence Litchfield, 56, for the criminal conduct which led to three deaths. He added: "These matters are so serious as to require the imposition of an immediate sentence to punish you for your criminal conduct which has resulted in the loss of three innocent lives."

He recognised that there was no sense of vindictiveness or need for retribution on the part of victims' relatives. The sentence was not intended to reflect the worth of the lives lost.

Cook Anne Taylor, 51, from Wallingford, Oxfordshire; assistant bosun Emily Macfarlane, 19, from Felixstowe,



The *Maria Asumpta* lying on rocks at Mous Rock, near Padstow, Cornwall, on 30 May 1995. Photograph: BBC/Reuters

Suffolk and 30-year-old second engineer John Shannon, from Queensland, Australia, were killed when the 137-year-old *Maria Asumpta* hit submerged rocks at Mous Rock, near Padstow, Cornwall, on 30 May 1995.

Richard Lissack, QC, for the prosecution, had told the court that Litchfield failed to sail the ship at a safe distance from the shore, and had to rely on the engines to avoid grounding, knowing they were likely to fail because of contaminated fuel.

The Crown did not allege that Litchfield intended to kill the crew members, but that he was guilty of causing their deaths "by criminal negligence

—by his unlawful if unintentional conduct."

After the verdict Ms Macfarlane's mother, Suzie, 51, said Litchfield had both influence and money and had used it to "wriggle out of his responsibilities as a leader."

In tears, she added: "Remember, this is a leader who managed to scramble off the boat before the two women and one man left behind had died."

Ms Macfarlane, who had only been on board for several months, was a poor swimmer and too terrified to jump overboard and swim to safety. However, just weeks before she had helped rescue someone who

had fallen in the water at Gloucester docks. And a crewman who survived, Adam Pursar, 47, from St Mawes in Cornwall, described to the court how he had felt "completely and utterly" let down by Litchfield and had shouted at him "you bastard, you bastard" at the moment of impact.

Mr Pursar added: "I saw John Shannon. He was holding the base of a picnic box which was fairly buoyant but it did not have a handle and was difficult to hold on to. After a time his strength failed and he let go, and he disappeared."

However, the son of Ms Taylor, gave evidence on behalf of Litchfield during the trial, and said that he did not hold him responsible for her death. Darren Taylor, 22, had previously served with Litchfield on the *Maria Asumpta*, and told the jury he would be happy to sail with him again.

The *Maria Asumpta* tragedy was the second time Litchfield had been involved in a sinking of a ship. In 1983, *The Marques*, which Litchfield co-owned, was lost at the edge of the so-called Bermuda Triangle during a Tall Ships race.

The Marques had featured in several television and film productions including *Poldark*, *The Onedin Line*, and *Jamaica Inn* as well as a production of *Dracula* with Lord Olivier. Litchfield was not on board at the time of the accident, and was not accused of an offence.

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Brewery chains to target alcopops at adult market

Andrew Yates

The two biggest brewing and pubs groups in the United Kingdom are preparing to change radically the way they market their highly controversial alcopops, with the specific aim of defusing the row over under-age drinking.

Bass is considering a multi-million pound relaunch of Hoopers Hooch, the leading alcoholic lemonade drink. More than 3 million bottles and cans of Hoopers Hooch are sold every week.

Scottish Courage has also admitted that it is revamping Two Dogs lemonade, which it distributes for the Merrydown cider group, to appeal to "women and older customers".

The climbdown by the two drinks groups comes as Safeway, the supermarket chain, yesterday became the latest in a long line of retailers to withdraw some alcopops from its shelves.

The Co-op and frozen food group Iceland have already banned alcopops and two leading pub chains, Whitbread and JD Wetherspoon, announced earlier this week that they planned to stop selling alcopops.

The move also comes just weeks before the Portman Group, the drinks industry watchdog, is to introduce a code of practice aimed at cracking down on under-age drinking and alcopops.

"The drinks themselves are not the problem, it is the way they are marketed. We welcome



Hoopers Hooch: More than 3 million drinks sold a week

any move to change the brands so they are aimed at the adult market," said a Portman Group spokesman.

From next month the Portman Group will have sweeping powers to force retailers to ban

alcopops if they believe they are designed to appeal to under-18s.

Scottish Courage is about to launch a £1m advertising campaign in an effort to try and promote Two Dogs as "a more adult drink" targeting the over-30s, especially females.

The new drink, which will have a sharper taste, will be served in longer bottles and the size of the word "alcoholic" will be significantly increased on the label.

Bass is considering taking off the characteristic cartoon lemon on the Hoopers Hooch label and repackaging the bottle, according to industry sources.

The market for alcopops has grown rapidly since Two Dogs was introduced from Australia to Britain in 1995. Since then

more than a hundred new brands have been introduced and the market has grown to an estimated £350m a year.

But there has been mounting concern that the proliferation of brightly coloured products, which have traded under names such as Purple Passion and TNT-Liquid Dynamite and are designed to appeal to younger drinkers, have led to an increase in under-age drinking.

When Moo, an alcoholic milk, went on sale in Oxfordshire earlier this year it caused uproar among politicians and anti-drink campaigners. The Home Office is likely to introduce other measures to clamp down on alcopops, including the introduction of a national proof of age card.



Man of the match: Grobbelaar yesterday. Expert witnesses said that in videos they saw there was no sign of any attempts to bend results



Football hails end of 'trial of the century'

Michael Streeter

When it finally came - after two trials and 79 days of courtroom drama - the verdict was a massive relief for English football authorities. Last night's announcement of an inquiry by the Football Association into betting in football shows there is concern that a syndicate could recruit Premier League players into the legal "forecasting" of results, as admitted in court. However, the allegation of illegal match-rigging was emphatically rejected.

The verdict was also a triumph for former Gladiators presenter and businessman John Fashanu and his co-defendants Hans Segers and Heng Suan Lim. The prosecution's case had certainly been sensational, for once justifying tabloid hype that this was the "Soccer Trial of the Century".

The former Aston Villa and Wimbledon striker Fashanu, a former Dr Barnardo's boy, said to be worth £6m, had been accused of being the "middle" man between a gambling syndicate in Indonesia and two English-based goalkeepers, teammate Segers and former Liverpool and Southampton keeper Bruce Grobbelaar.

It was claimed the syndicate had channelled up to £500,000 to their alleged fixer in London, Mr Lim, who passed the cash on to the footballers via Mr

Match-rigging verdict came as a big relief for the sport's hierarchy

Fashanu in return for helping to fix Premier League matches.

The scan, said the prosecution, was that the syndicate could use inside knowledge of likely scorers to make fortunes on big stakes in Jakarta.

On one occasion Mr Grobbelaar was said to have received £40,000 for throwing a match in which Liverpool lost 3-0 to Newcastle United, a claim rejected by the jury's verdict.

The prosecution had claimed a record of phone calls, many on mobiles, between the accused pointed to their involvement in the conspiracy to fix matches. The calls showed Mr Lim calling Mr Grobbelaar and Mr Lim or vice versa, sometimes just before and just after matches said to be the subject of fixing by the Far Eastern syndicate. The fatal flaw for their case, as shown by the jury's verdict, was that this pattern of calls also fitted the case made by the defendants - that the quartet had been involved in forecasting the results of the matches, a legal practice, and not the fixing of games.

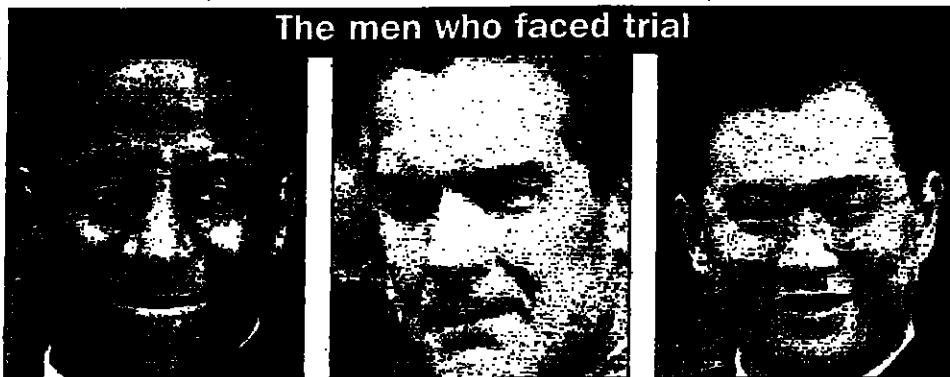
Mr Grobbelaar and Mr

Segers, who unlike Mr Fashanu gave evidence at the trials, admitted they had given their professional advice on the likely outcome of English Premier League matches as well as, in Dutchman Segers' case, those in the Netherlands.

Moreover, a string of unimpeachable witnesses including the 1966 World Cup goalkeeper Gordon Banks, and his former colleague Alan Ball, who was Mr Grobbelaar's manager at Southampton, said there was no sign of any attempts to bend results in video of matches they saw. Yesterday the jury agreed with them.

The allegations became public in 1994, when the Sun published transcripts of taped conversations between Mr Grobbelaar and his former business partner Christopher Vincent, in which he is apparently heard admitting match-fixing in the past and is seen apparently taking £2,000, which Mr Vincent claimed was from a separate match-fixing syndicate. Mr Grobbelaar told the court that he was only stringing Mr Vincent along.

The article sparked a police investigation, culminating in the trials. Although the jury cleared Mr Grobbelaar of involvement in any previous conspiracy with Mr Fashanu and Mr Lim, they have yet to rule on a charge that he took the £2,000 to influence the results of games.



The men who faced trial

John Fashanu was a Dr Barnardo's boy who became a television celebrity after a career which gave him an FA Cup winner's medal with Wimbledon. Dubbed Fash the Bash for his physical approach to football, he is also a successful businessman worth £6m. As co-host of Gladiators, alongside Ulrika Jonsson, he commanded £100,000 a year.

Hans Segers had a seven-year career with Wimbledon which saw him become a key member of their so-called "Crazy Gang". Although not a spectacular keeper he had a great rapport with his fans and was a Wimbledon folk hero. The Dutchman moved to England in August 1984 after Brian Clough signed him for Nottingham Forest. He later joined Wimbledon.

Heng Suan Lim was brought up an orphan in Malaysia and found an identity through football. He played for the Malaysian under-18 team and he also said he applied for a trial with West Ham. Lim, 32, arrived in the UK in 1986 to study accountancy. A high-rolling gambler, Lim said he was a member of several London casinos and would gamble up to £7,000 a night.

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news

Clark blames the Press for hounding Labour MP to his death

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

Press intrusion was blamed yesterday by Alan Clark, the Tory MP, for contributing to the persecution which drove Gordon McMaster, the Labour MP, to suicide.

Mr Clark, an outspoken former Conservative minister who has suffered from the press pack in the past, said new restrictions on press intrusion of privacy could have helped protect those like Mr McMaster who were in the spotlight.

The circumstances surrounding Mr McMaster's death

may now increase the pressure for press privacy laws, which Tony Blair has been resisting. The previous Government decided against any immediate action after a long review by Virginia Bottomley, the former National Heritage Secretary.

The Labour chief whip, Nicholas Brown is investigating the allegations made in Mr McMaster's suicide note that two Labour figures, Don Dixon, a former deputy chief whip, and Tommy Graham, a Labour MP with a neighbouring seat, had been "bad mouthing" him. Both deny the claims.

The *New Statesman* this week carries an article by a gay journalist suggesting that Mr McMaster was a victim of repressed homosexuality. But Irene Adams, a close friend of Mr McMaster, said the press also played a part in the pressure on the MP by asking him whether he was dying from Aids.

Ms Adams recalled that Mr McMaster, who suffered from chronic fatigue syndrome, which he believed was brought about by exposure to chemicals when he was gardener, could not speak because he was so upset and distressed by the call from a local reporter in Paisley.

Mr Clark said Lady Cathness, wife of a former Tory minister in the Lords, and Lady Green, wife of the former Director of Public Prosecutions, were both driven to suicide partly as a result of the pressure from the press.

He described the press as being like an "18th-century mob", and describes the treatment he and his family have received at the hands of reporters and photographers. On one occasion, Mr Clark's wife, Jane, was wrongly told by the press that he had fathered a love child.

"This was quite remarkably cruel and deceitful behaviour," he wrote. He added: "No-one who has not experienced the pain of having their loved ones in tears for hours on end, their children too terrified to attend school, the feeling of total entrapment in their own house, can appreciate what this is like."

"And it is deliberate. It is, sometimes literally, a blood sport, and the practitioners enjoy it." He wrote: "It is routine practice for the wife to be goaded without mercy in order to provoke a reaction."

"If she stays contentedly married to a 'cheat', she is a wimp and a 'doormat'. If she walks out, then it is the press who have scored. Another marriage wrecked - excellent."

"Press harassment does drive



Clark and McMaster: 'New restrictions on press could have protected McMaster'



ve some people over the edge. If you are in public life, you have to be able to resist it. But if you are innocent, at the edge of it, like Lady Cathness and Lady Green, it can be very cruel and lead to tragic results.

The most offensive journalists, he said, were the groups of reporters who waited on the doorstep, and the "monkeys" who popped their flashbulbs en masse at their victims.

Attacking the press complaints commission as "useless", Mr Clark said the European Court of Human Rights was going to bring into English Law certain restrictions on the intrusion of the right of privacy which he welcomed.

But he also took a sideswipe on BBC radio at Frank Johnson, editor of the *Spectator*, for including Diana, Princess of Wales, in his article, without his permission. "I am very surprised. The *Spectator* is meant to be a serious paper. That is why I sent it that article. I now wish I had sent it to Alan Rusbridger to put in the *Guardian*."

DAILY POEM

post-mistress

By Anne MacLeod

my feet endure
the seasons' floods
fingers sift, delve deeply

a ripple of postcards
on an ink-scrawled tide
stamps from Amsterdam, Lloret del Mar

where Morag had her first joint
at eighty-two
reckless in the noon-day heat

and wrote to tell her son
all about it

This poem comes from Anne MacLeod's first collection, *Standing by Thisles* (Scottish Cultural Press, £4.95). The author lives in Inverness, studied medicine in Aberdeen and now works as a dermatologist in Highland communities.

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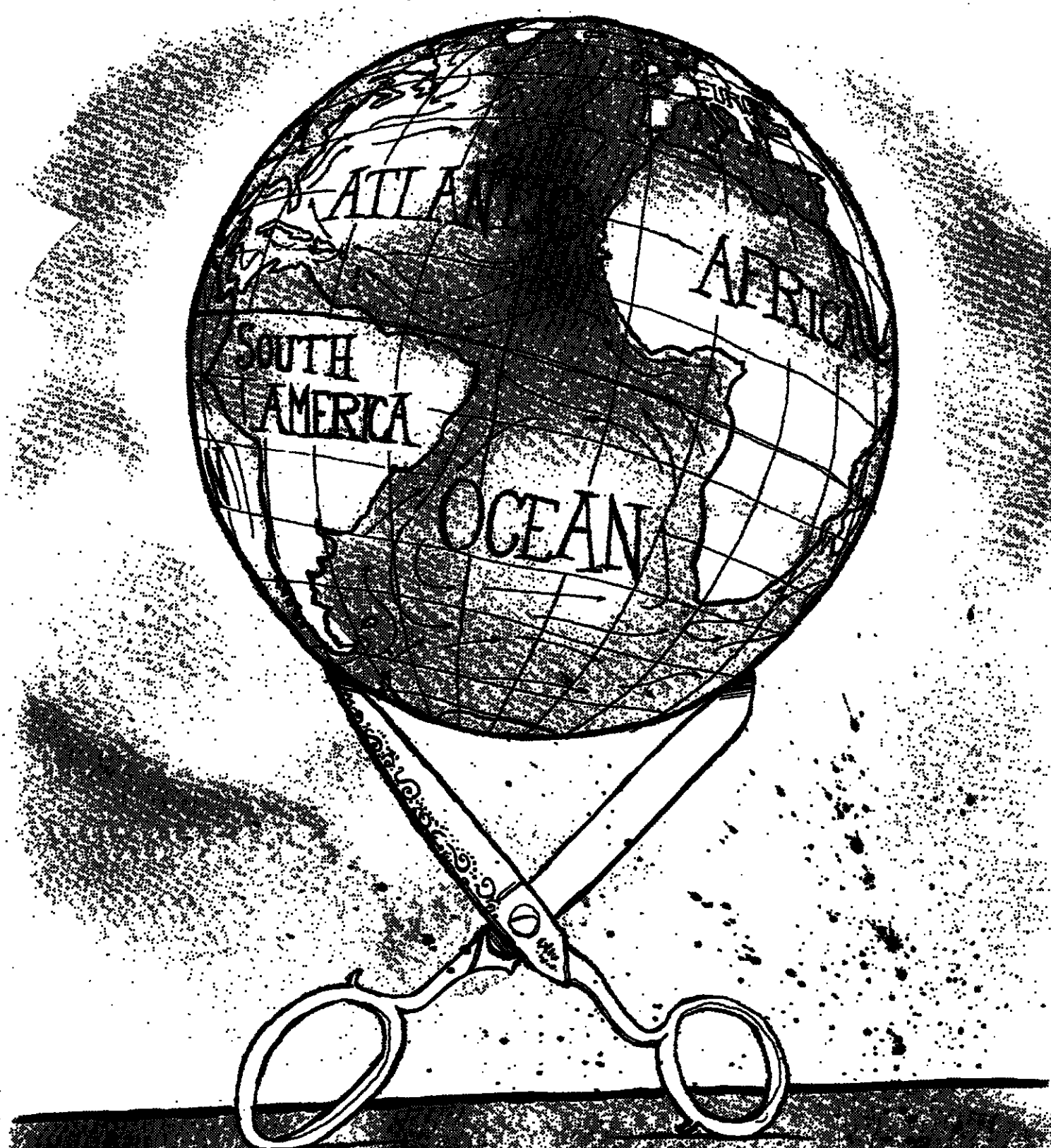


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The Ulster ceasefire: Six beatings, three shootings and two bombings

Jojo Moyes Belfast

The IRA ceasefire, marking a cessation of political violence, is nearly three weeks old. In that time Northern Ireland has seen at least six sectarian beatings, three shootings, one hotel bombing, one petrol bombing and the delivery of two hoax devices.

Politicians and police warned yesterday that until the level of violence endemic in Belfast society dropped, the "precarious" political peace process would be in jeopardy.

Steve McBride, justice spokesman for Ulster's Alliance Party, noting the continuing high levels of sectarian-related violence, said that while people were still being maimed, threatened and intimidated, the risk that the ceasefire would crack was only too great. He said the incidents might look minor in isolation, but often had a "knock-on" effect. "Someone feels obliged to retaliate, a family feud turns into something much worse, they see someone else getting away with it, and it just escalates," Mr McBride told BBC Radio Ulster's Talkback programme.

"These groups are exercising violence and terror as a way of maintaining power and influence in particular localities," he said. "We have to take this very seriously. It's a real threat to what very precarious peace process or ceasefire we currently have."

He said the problem was that many in Ulster had become so used to the incidents that they achieved a degree of "acceptability". But these are horrendous injuries that are being inflicted on people, without any kind of defence. Any society that tolerated that sort of conduct as a legitimate form of punishment would be viewed by the rest of the world as reprehensible."

The organisation Families Against Violence, which deals with up to 30 such cases every month, said it had seen "no significant drop" in low-level violence since the latest ceasefire was called. "The beatings may have largely stopped, but the shootings are continuing and the intimidation and threats are still going on. And they don't get reported because people don't dare," a spokeswoman said.

She added: "A lot of these cases are one 10-year-old kid who's hit an eight-year-old and the mother has gone round to sort it out. Whereas before, the mothers might have had a good old talking to each other, now they're just saying 'get out of my door', going inside and making the phone call."

"The paramilitaries have got nothing to do at the moment, so they don't mind getting involved. And the family is left with bricks through the window, intimidation, and they have no resort. What are they going to do?"

The Royal Ulster Constabulary, meanwhile, was said yesterday to be "concerned" by an apparently republican shooting in the province, the first since the ceasefire was announced. An RUC source said that up until Tuesday, signs had been "encouraging", due to the lack of republican activity. But Wednesday night's shooting of a taxi driver by gunmen who identified themselves as members of the IRA had halted that optimism.

He added that contrary to recent reports, while the sectarian violence continued, there would be no significant drop in security measures for the near future.

"The bottom line is that we're only a few days in. During the 1994 ceasefire it was months before police took on a reduction



Happy days: Children playing innocently around a burst water pipe in a Belfast street, but even a minor squabble among them can have serious repercussions Photograph: Brian Harris

in security or anything. We've had a 1,000lb bomb at a hotel, the INLA saying they're going to carry on regardless and the LVA warning Catholics out of their areas. It would be someone foolish who would say everything

in the garden is rosy," he said. ■ Mo Mowlam, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, yesterday said that the Government was standing firm on its target of holding multi-party talks in Belfast on 15 Sep-

tember, in spite of a rejection of the process by Ian Paisley, leader of the hard-line Democratic Unionist Party, writes Colin Brown.

Mr Paisley said after a meeting with Ms Mowlam in London that the Government would be "digging its own grave" on the talks. He repeated his claims that the talks were "dead in the water" and put forward a four-page alternative plan, which it is

believed seeks arms decommissioning by the IRA before Sinn Féin can join the talks. He warned he would not sit down with Sinn Féin leaders, and would not take part in "proximity" talks.

Meanwhile, Ken Maginnis, the Ulster Unionist spokesman, and negotiator Martin McGuinness are to debate live and face-to-face on BBC's Newsnight programme next Tuesday.

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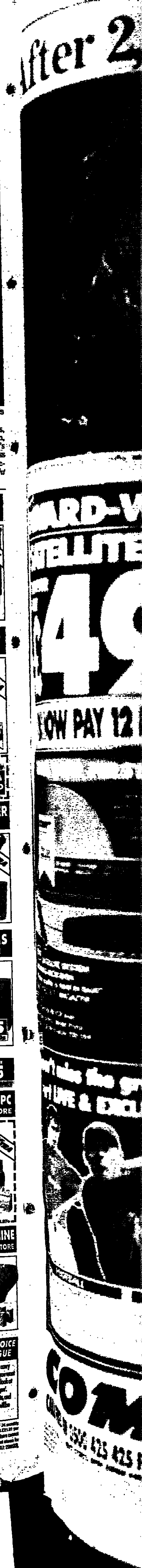
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A high-contrast, black and white photograph showing a chain-link fence in the foreground, with a dark, silhouetted industrial building or structure visible through the fence in the background. The image is grainy and has a stark, almost graphic quality.

Photographs: Guy Newman, Tim Cuff

Despite the closure, the mine is not short of tin, with estimates of at least three years of reserves left.

The Government later promised support for the area. Barbara Roche, minister for small businesses at the Department of Trade and Industry, said: "The Government office for the South West and all the local agencies are ready to work closely with the local authorities about what can be done to alleviate the impact."

Ms Atherton said she was devastated by the news of the closure. "The livelihoods of so many people and their families depend on the mine.

"In this already depressed area, it is a severe blow. I think every tribute is due to the hard work of so many who put everything into making it successful. But, in spite of all their efforts they have been overwhelmed by economic circumstances.

"It is a very sad day for the whole of Cornwall ... It is impossible to express the anguish that will be felt across the county," she said.

that the mine will not be "moth-balled" with care and maintenance; but would be abandoned.

This means that any last-minute attempt to rescue the enterprise will be a race against time. Already the workforce have stopped any "development", that is, the opening of any new areas for mining. For six weeks that means that any takeover would be able to continue with few problems.

But as the six-month closure process nears its end it will become more and more difficult — and therefore expensive — to reopen full production. Eventually, after the pumps are stopped, water levels will rise and hamper any mining attempts for the future.

A mining source said: "That will make it very difficult, though not impossible, to resume any mining in the future."

He added: "However, since early 1996, two major external factors have combined to force the company to take a very difficult decision to close the mine."

"The first was the significant drop in the tin price, which is quoted in US dollars; secondly, the substantial weakening of the dollar against sterling."

He said the price of a tonne of tin had fallen to £3,200 – way below the £4,000 a tonne minimum needed to keep the mine open.

Ms Ansari added: "This is yet another blow to the economy of an area which has twice the national average of unemployment. This also adds weight to Cornwall's campaign for special European funding status and emphasises the need to influence the new South West Regional Development Agency effectively."

The company has indicated.

Trade, Margaret Beckett, and called for a "regeneration package" for the area. It is feared the closure could have a knock-on effect on other jobs.

The beginning of the end of the industry came when the tin price collapsed in 1985, forcing the closure of mines across Europe. In 1994, when South Crofty also seemed doomed, 1,500 small investors, including the miners themselves, offered to buy £500,000 of shares in a £1m effort.

Since their involvement, the mine has received cash injections of about £6.3m. A company spokesman praised the "dedicated" workforce, which had reduced costs and increased productivity over the past years.

After a history stretching back at least 2,500 years, tin-mining is to end in Cornwall. The last surviving mine in Britain, and Europe, yesterday announced it will close with the loss of 270 jobs.

The first 75 jobs to go will be through voluntary redundancy and lay-offs. Owners of South Crofty mine, near Redruth, blamed the decision - which will take effect over the next six months - on the falling price of tin on the world market and the strengthening value of the pound against the dollar.

The workforce was told of the announcement yesterday in a meeting at Redruth Cinema.

It marks a long, sometimes nostalgic battle to save Cornwall's most distinctive industry, which during its heyday in the 19th century employed 30,000 people, spread through 400 mines. There were tin mines in the region before, during and after the Roman empire in Britain.

The mine's project manager, Bernard Ballard, said yesterday: "It's a very sad day. Tin-mining is the great Cornish tradition." However, he said there would certainly be efforts made locally to keep the mine alive. "There is such strength of feeling here about it. There has got to be a way to keep it open."

"It would be an absolute tragedy if the mine closed and then the problems with the price of tin and the exchange rate changed. But as things stand, unless there is an intervention, it will close."

His views were echoed by Doris Ansari, leader of Cornwall County Council, who said: "This is a very sad day for Cornwall, which means far more than the immediate loss of jobs - tin-mining is probably the most potent aspect of Cornwall's history and heritage."

She urged local MP Cathy Atherton to lead a delegation to the President of the Board of

Canned history of proud industry

At the peak of the Cornish tin boom in the 19th century there were 400 mines employing 30,000 people.

Cornwall has produced two million tonnes of tin, most brought to the surface in the last century. Tin is found in veins or lodes and unlike coal seams, these tend towards the vertical rather than horizontal.

The tin was laid down 250 million years ago when molten granite intruded into the earth's surface. Superheated waters rich in tin oxide and other chemicals were forced into the surrounding rocks, where they cooled to form veins of tin and copper ore.

The world market for tin remains stable. The metal is used for cans and as a chemical in industrial processes. Production is largely concentrated in Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brazil and Bolivia. Until 1870, Cornwall and Malaya monopolised tin production. This ended with the discovery of tin in Australia, causing the industry's first recession.

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One man's dream green house comes to life



Neil Winder has designed and built the ultimate eco-home. It will resist the ravages of man-made climate changes and sits on stilts, so that future flood water can swirl beneath. Eager not to further damage the environment, Mr Winder, an architect, also set about turning his four-bedroom timber-framed home into one of Britain's most environmentally friendly dwellings. Instead of going down a sewer, human waste goes into a chamber where, aided by straw and sawdust, it is turned into compost for his roses. Waste water from the sink and the bath is cleaned by a reed-bed system to purify it before it drains into a ditch. And instead of burning fossil fuels to keep warm, a three tonne stove burns locally coppiced wood. Mr Winder, 48, his partner Flo Maitland and their 10-year-old daughter Molly have lived for a year in the house called Star Yard at Pulgrave, near Diss, Norfolk, in the val-

ley of the river Waveney. The walls, filled with eight inches of recycled paper insulation, keep the interiors cool in summer and warm in winter. They also "breathe", avoiding condensation problems. The house is clad in unseasoned larch wood, an efficient and cheap rain barrier grown a few miles away. Mr Winder also insisted on minimum use of lead, glues and toxic preservatives. The house stands up to two and a half feet above the ground on a dozen concrete stilts on individual concrete pads. As well as protecting against any flash floods, they reduce the dangers of subsidence caused by droughts shrinking the clay subsoil. The roofing is extra strong to withstand gale force winds. And there is timber gutting twice the normal width to cope with future cloud-bursts. The house cost Mr Winder about £68,000 to build - the same as building a conventional brick home. He



Cladding - unseasoned, locally grown and weatherproof larchwood

Gutters - extra wide to cope with downpours

Heating - wood burning stove uses locally harvested wood thinnings

Walls - insulated with an eight inch layer of recycled paper

Stilts - the house is up to two and a half feet above the ground. Reduces risk of subsidence damage and flooding

Toilet waste - falls into a sunken chamber, mixed with sawdust to become a fertile compost. Flue removes odour

"I'm not an eco-fascist. I just wanted to causing the minimum of disturbance to the environment," says Neil Winder of his home

Photograph: Brian Harris

paid a local farmer £39,000 for the half-acre plot after getting planning permission from Mid Suffolk Council. There have been difficulties though, most memorably with the compost toilet. "We had a smell and

a fly problem at first, but this was completely overcome by altering the design of the flue," said Mr Winder. Also, the reed-bed water filtering system suffered from a build up of grease, but he solved that by intro-

ducing a straw trap through which the waste water must first run. The next phase is to introduce solar water heating and recycle the purified reed-bed water for use in the house. Mr Winder said: "Nobody can say

with any confidence what the world will be like in 40 years time, but you can make some guesses and that's what I have done. "Scientists are saying we will be having hotter summers and periods of drought followed by sudden

rounds of heavy rain and storms. 'I'm not an eco-fascist. I just wanted to go as far as I could in building a comfortable and functional family home to live and work in while causing the minimum of disturbance to the environment.'"

Top security prisoners banned from touching families

Jason Bennett
Crime Correspondent

An inquiry is to be launched into why some IRA prisoners and other top-security inmates in British jails are banned from touching their family for years, it was announced yesterday. Evidence also emerged that suggests some of the country's

most dangerous convicted criminals are switching from taking cannabis to heroin in an attempt to beat drug tests. In one month more than half the positive drug tests were for heroin. The revelations follow the publication today of the findings of an unannounced short inspection last September of Belmarsh high-security jail, in

south-east London, by the Chief Inspector of Prisons, Sir David Ramsbotham. He will hold an inquiry later this year to review the visiting arrangements for prisoners deemed to be an exceptional risk at the country's six high-security jails. Sir David's report highlights the condition faced by the

inmates kept in the separate special security unit inside Belmarsh. All prisoners within the unit, which holds up to 48 men, including convicted IRA terrorists such as Paul "Dingus" Magee, who is serving 25 years for murdering a special constable, have closed visits - a plastic screen divides inmates from

prisoners. "For some this may mean they can go for years without being able to touch their children or wife, with the obvious effects on relationships," noted the report. Sir David said there was far too little out-of-cell activity for Category A prisoners. They are only allowed out for 90 minutes a day.

There are six exceptional-risk inmates at Belmarsh, most of whom are IRA members, and 27 men considered high-risk. The Inspectorate is concerned that at some high-security jails contact is allowed and wants to ensure prisons get the right balance between the needs of security and humanity. In February, the Tory gov-

ernment turned down a recommendation by the former Chief Medical Officer, Sir Donald Acheson, that closed visits at the SSUs should be ended. But the Prison Service did agree to regular three-monthly health checks for inmates. Results from mandatory drug tests at Belmarsh reveal an alarming increase in the

number of inmates found to have taken heroin. The proportion rose from 9 per cent of the positive results in December 1995 to a maximum of 54.5 per cent in June last year. The inspectors also came across a mystery during their visit: how 12,000 prison library books had gone missing since 1991.

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Anger and tears as Guam crash families beg to see dead



Devastation: Firefighters battle with the burning wreckage of the DC-8 cargo plane which crashed into an industrial district of Miami

Meanwhile, Rika Matsuda, the 11-year-old Japanese girl who was pulled from the burning wreckage by the Governor of Guam, Carl Gutierrez, appeared at a press conference in Guam with the governor yesterday. Rika, who escaped the disaster with minor cuts, bruises and concussions, was recovering quickly, her father Tatsuo said. Rika's mother was believed to have perished in the flames that engulfed the plane.

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Syria hears Israeli Arab plea for a real peace

Robert Fisk
Damascus

Confronted by what he regards as an Israeli government hell-bent on burying the "peace process", President Assad of Syria today takes the dramatic step of welcoming at least 50 Israeli Arabs to Damascus, seven of them members of the Israeli parliament, the Knesset. They were due to fly into Syria late last night on their Israeli passports for meetings with the president and with his foreign minister, Farouk al-Sharaa.

A delegation of Israeli Arabs briefly visited Syria in 1995 to express their condolences to President Assad after the death of his son, Basil, in a road accident, but today's visit allows the Syrian leader to show that he has political allies inside Israel itself – at the very moment when the Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu is being denounced in the Damascus press as a warmonger who seeks only to destroy the foundations of the "peace process".

The Israeli Arabs, who are flying via Cairo since no direct air links exist between Syria and Israel, include members of the Israeli Labour Party, Meretz, the Democratic Front for Equality and Peace, a number of journalists and more than a dozen members of Islamist movements. "They are against Netanyahu's policy in the occupied territories," Mr Mohamed Salman, the Syrian information minister, said yesterday. "They want to achieve a real peace with the Arab states and they asked to visit Syria to express their support for Syria's position and to tell the world that people can co-exist."

Syria regards Mr Netanyahu's refusal to withdraw Israeli troops from the occupied Golan Heights as an Israeli betrayal of the 1991 Madrid peace conference which was specifically founded on UN Security Council resolution 242 – which called for total Israeli withdrawal from all occupied lands in return for security of all states in the area.

In the past, Israel's Arabs were regarded by the rest of the Arab world with suspicion and sometimes outright hostility. For 18 years, they lived under harsh Israeli military law while being regarded elsewhere in the Middle East as little more than agents of Israel. That Syria's strict Baathist regime should welcome them now emphasises how their role has changed – and how important they have become to President Assad.

"The Palestinians who stuck to their land in 1948 continued their struggle and sacrificed thousands of martyrs to the national cause. That's why we in Syria open our doors to them, contrary to the former situation," Mr Salman said.

Indeed, little could the Israeli Arabs – hitherto heretics in the Palestinian world – ever have imagined checking in at the Damascus Meridien hotel for meetings with Israel's fiercest Arab critic and his foreign minister. Over four days they will also be visiting the tomb of Salahadin al-Ayoubi and the grave of Yousef el-Azmi, who led the doomed Syrian cavalry charge against French tanks at the battle of the Maysaloun Pass in 1920.

One can only imagine their thoughts when they are taken to the Najjah Martyrs' Cemetery in Damascus where thousands of Syrian military victims of the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli wars lie – all killed by the country whose passport the visitors now carry.

■ Beirut – The killing of four more civilians, including a mother and her two children aged four and 10, brought the south Lebanon "ceasefire" to near-total collapse yesterday, as the Hizbollah fired at least 40 Katyusha rockets at Israel's occupation zone in revenge for the killing of five of their members by Israeli troops earlier in the week.

In the space of 12 hours yesterday, a militiaman in Israel's South Lebanon Army was killed by a Hizbollah bomb, while Israel's return fire killed a farmer. The mother and her children died in the bomb ambush in Merkaba.



Eye of the storm: Pauline Hanson, whose extremism on immigration, foreign investment and welfare has struck a chord with voters

Photograph: Reuters

Canberra (Reuters) – Australia has set up a special diplomatic unit to counter race-row politician Pauline Hanson's negative impact in Asia and to push her off the domestic and international political stage.

Deputy prime minister Tim Fischer said Australia's future lay in the region, and his conservative government would not allow anyone to sabotage its lucrative trade relationships with its Asian neighbours. The images of Australia unit, headed by diplomats, will target Asian media and international news agencies to combat the image of Australia fuelled by Ms Hanson's prominence. It is the latest move by the foreign ministry to discredit Ms Hanson.

Mr Fischer said Canberra's regional diplomatic moves, such as its recent talks with Japan, were

Australia declares war on the racist politician who is proving bad for business

aimed at "not only boosting our relations but dealing with those elements who would sabotage and divide and destroy those trading relations. That is something internal to government, but it reflects a government getting on with the task of seeing Hanson off the stage."

The move follows a secret campaign by the foreign affairs

department to discredit Ms Hanson, an independent politician, throughout the region.

Department sources said it had been ordered to run an anti-Hanson campaign, translating speeches and information discrediting her and giving it to foreign governments and media.

Prime Minister John Howard

and his Liberal-National government initially ignored Ms Hanson after she sparked a national race row last year, believing she would quickly return to obscurity. But her anti-immigration, anti-foreign investment and anti-Aboriginal welfare policies have struck a chord with voters worried by high unemployment and sluggish growth.

Polls show support for her One Nation party at between 7 and 8 per cent – enough to make her the third force in domestic politics and deliver an influential bloc in parliament if that is maintained to the next election, due by mid-1999. She has also gained a high regional profile, with some polls showing she is better known than Mr Howard among Asian executives.

In Japan, comic strips have drawn the Hanson phenomenon into their story-lines, painting her as a racist damaging Australia's reputation and accusing Mr Howard of reviving racism in domestic politics. Foreign Minister Alexander Downer attacked Ms Hanson's policies during a speech in Singapore this week as "ethically reprehensible" and suicidal for Australian prosperity.



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No help for refugees fleeing clouds of fire

Phil Davison
speaks to
victims of the
Montserrat
eruptions

St Peter's, Montserrat — Mary Irish, 87, born to slaves on a cotton plantation, is now in many ways worse off than when she was a child labourer during the First World War. She sleeps on the canvas of a wooden-framed cot, with no mattress, alongside 57 other women and children in the stone-floored Anglican Church of St Peter's. The stench of sweat is overwhelming.

As she told me her story yesterday, a siren wailed, telling us the Soufriere volcano was about to blow again about four miles away, well within range of ash, gas and stones. But Mary was worried about only whether she would get bread for lunch as she had eaten no breakfast.

"Since we come here, we don't get nothin'. The government give us 100 dollars (£25) in food vouchers a month but I'm not a well woman. I can't walk far," she said. To our left was a rusty fridge, shared by all 58 refugees. To our right was the blue and white painted pulpit, now used as a cupboard.

Outside, a lean-to provided a single toilet. Down a slope of overgrown grass, among gravestones and beneath a crimson-blossomed Flamboyant tree, was a breezeblock square serving as a cold water shower. On various gravestones, refugees sat and scrubbed clothes in pails or plastic basins of water.

The scene was a pitiful example of how slow and disorganised Britain and the local government have been in pro-



From the depths of Hell: Black ash spewing out from the Soufriere volcano in central Montserrat blankets the town of Plymouth, which may have to be abandoned
Photograph: Barry Lewis

say, Lord have mercy on me. "Now, de government no help us at all. All dey give us is papers. I don't even have shoes so I can go to church. I suffocate wit de breath of the people here. I feel sick. Ask dem to get me a house, please."

Fifty yards below St Peter's Anglican church, the scenes are even more heart-rending. In a single-room former stone schoolhouse, 50 elderly or mentally ill refugees live and sleep on cots in what they call Scraps Memorial Centre. They call it that because they all try to make basic handicrafts from scraps of cotton material.

In one corner, 104-year-old Isly Bob slumps over his cot, slurping rice for breakfast from a plastic bowl. In another, 7-year-old Elizabeth Francis, a tall, beautifully-spoken refugee from the township of St. Patrick's, swats flies from her 43-year-old physically and mentally-disabled son Melvin, crumpled in a cot and wearing a dust mask to keep off volcanic ash.

viding decent conditions for the 1,300 homeless. Some have been put up with families in private homes, others are living in tents at a camp at Gerald's Bottom in the north. This week's regular eruptions, forcing evacuation of an earlier buffer zone, have made things far worse.

"I was in another church first, in Frith's, but dey evacuate dat on Monday when de volcano blow again," said Mary, her head wrapped in floral cloth from the same curtain material as her dress. "Dey wouldn't even let me take my mattress. We no get time take nothin'." On her feet are a pair of tattered, oversized basketball shoes her son James, living in England, brought her during his last trip several

years ago. Just after we spoke, the volcano blew. Mary did not venture outside to see the churning mushroom cloud of brown and grey gas and ash that surged from the crater.

But then the church was bombarded by a storm of pebbles that blacked out the sun. Birds flew wildly in panic and the volcano created what was like a heavy hail storm covering the entire island in a thick layer of what looked and felt like dry cement.

The refugees — some, like Mary, homeless for the two years since the volcano first erupted, have arranged the pews in squares to enclose their own "homes." Some have put up hospital-like screens for a degree of privacy. Against one inside wall,

42-year-old refugee Delores Henderson has managed to set up a wooden loom to weave cotton for clothes.

Sitting with me on a grave-

stone, housewife Linda Daley told me how the volcano's pyroclastic flow — an avalanche of red-hot gas and ash — nearly killed her on June 25 in Harris's

village. "I be washin' some clothes when dis stuff come up like a mighty sea," she said. "It don't make no noise. It come up with a mighty rushin' and I think

God was in that wind 'cos it blow away the heat. I got behind de school wall den I see fire over my head and my washbasin melt in front of me. I call up to Jesus and

Truth commission faces Hague court

Mary Braid
Johannesburg

The families of murdered anti-apartheid activists are planning to challenge South Africa's controversial Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the International Court of Justice in the Hague over its right to grant amnesty to the perpetrators of human rights crimes.

The move follows the release this week of Dirk Coetzee, a self-confessed state assassin of ANC lawyer Griffiths Mxenge, who was stabbed 40 times and had his throat cut in 1981.

Mr Coetzee should have been sentenced today for the murder in Durban High Court but the TRC, a cornerstone of South Africa's negotiated transition to democracy, intervened on Monday by fast-tracking Mr Coetzee's amnesty application for Mr Griffiths murder.

The commission, charged with exposing the truth about the apartheid era, has the power to offer amnesty to perpetrators in return for full disclosure of their crimes and proof they were politically motivated. The decision to grant

Mr Coetzee's amnesty is expected to be the first of many.

Mr Coetzee, the former commander of the notorious apartheid-era Vlakplaas police hit squad, is today back at his desk at the National Intelligence Agency, now in the pay of the ANC government.

The ANC has looked after him since he defected to them in 1989 and blew the whistle on the murders and atrocities committed by the National Party's state security forces. Mr Mxenge's family see the ANC's support of Coetzee as a betrayal of a man who gave his life for the struggle.

Today, the Mxenge family will appeal to the Durban High Court to overturn the TRC's decision, though two other High Court challenges to the TRC have already failed.

Yesterday, Cyril Morolo, who last year represented the Mxenge family and others (including the relatives of murdered Black Consciousness leader Steve Biko) in a failed bid to have the TRC's amnesty provisions declared unconstitutional, said he was now taking the families' cases into the international arena.

"The TRC's amnesty powers contravene international law," he said. "We want other countries to recognise it and for these amnesties to be declared null and void. We shall reach our goal."

He admitted funding the international legal challenge would be a problem. Mr Morolo said he had approached several international human rights groups but all said they had no money to fund the challenge.

"People don't want to dis-appoint President Mandela," said Mr Morolo, referring to the president's support for the TRC.

Mr Morolo plans to ask the international courts to try men like Mr Coetzee, since the TRC was preventing the South African courts from doing so.

Yesterday, a spokesman for the TRC said he was not surprised. "It was clear from the beginning the whole process was going to be marked by legal challenges from every possible quarter." Yesterday, Dirk Coetzee said he was disappointed that the Mxenge family was challenging the amnesty ruling. He said it was a pity they were "so full of hatred".

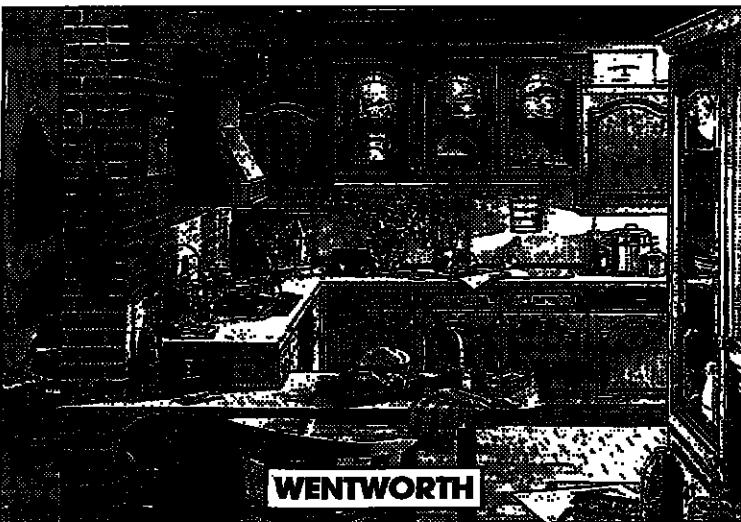
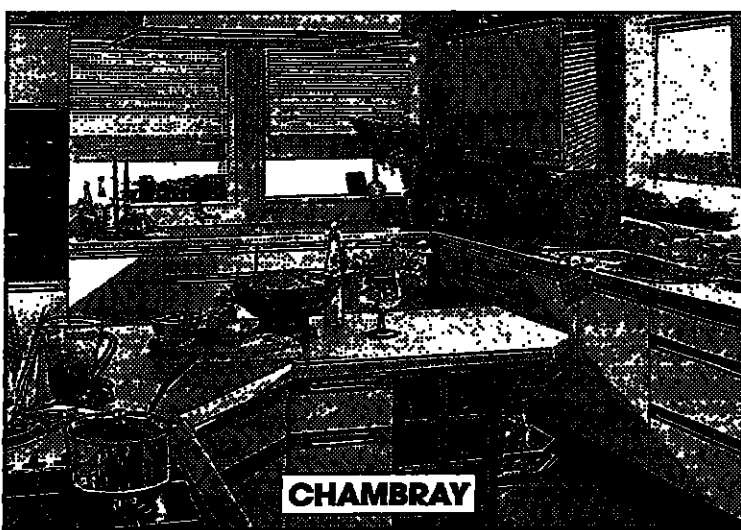
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international

Space odyssey: Repair crew dock at Russian craft as US celebrates successful Shuttle launch

Socket and spanner team join ailing Mir

Helen Womack
Moscow

Russia's cosmic repair men, Anatoly Solovyov and Pavel Vinogradov, docked successfully yesterday with the orbiting station *Mir*, which has been running on half power since it was involved in a space collision two months ago. About an hour after their Soyuz TM-26 rocket locked on to *Mir*, the new arrivals went through the hatch to an ecstatic welcome from the two Russians and the American waiting for them on board the station.

The outgoing crew, Vasily Tsibulev and Alexander Lazutkin of Russia and the British-born US physicist Michael Foale, had some bad news for the relief team, however. They had failed to repair *Mir*'s oxygen generating system, which broke down earlier this week, because they lacked a spare part. All five spacemen will be able to breathe, as they have back-up canisters with enough oxygen for two months. But fixing the generator will be an added headache for the repair men, who also have to overcome the consequences of the crash on 25 June.

It was the worst accident on the 11-year-old station, which has suffered a string of technical failures because it has outlived its service life, originally intended to be no more than five years. During a manual docking operation, a *Progress* cargo rocket bumped into *Mir*'s scientific module, Spektr, rupturing it so that it had to be disconnected from the rest of the station. The task of the repair men will be to seal the hole and reconnect Spektr to the

mother craft, which they will start to do on 20 August.

The job will be not only tricky but dangerous. Because Spektr is airless, the cosmonaut who enters it will have to wear a full space suit as if he were on a space walk. The passage into Spektr is extremely narrow and debris may be floating around inside. A puncture in the suit would be fatal.

Commander Solovyov, at 49 a veteran with four missions and 456 days in space under his belt, will do the repairs while his flight engineer, Mr Vinogradov, will stand behind him, shining a torch. Mr Vinogradov, on his first trip into space, was reported to have had a higher than normal pulse rate because of nerves during lift-off from the Baikonur launch pad on Tuesday but officials say he is settling down.

The latest mission is seen as crucial to the whole future of the Russian space programme. Moscow is hoping to exploit *Mir* for another two years. The United States is supporting Russia despite the mishaps because the two former rivals plan to have joint space station called Alpha by 2003.

However, the US space agency Nasa is reserving judgement about whether another US astronaut should replace Michael Foale when an *Atlantis* shuttle comes to pick him up from *Mir* next month.

The *Atlantis* will also bring the spare part needed to mend the oxygen system, a simple pipe which links the generator to the air intake. The old pipe is 11 years old and worn out like some part in a battered Lada car which, many ordinary Russians think, the once-prestigious *Mir* station now resembles.



Caught in flight: Space Shuttle *Discovery* lifts off from Cape Canaveral, Florida yesterday. The crew of six expect to stay in space for 11 days to carry out a scientific mission
Photograph: Pierre DuCharme/Reuters

US envoy puts pressure on war criminals

Rupert Cornwell

Bidding to salvage the Dayton peace accords he brokered 21 months ago, Richard Holbrooke yesterday ratcheted up pressure on suspected war criminals at large in the former Bosnia by meeting with the two top US military commanders who would have to give their blessing to any move to arrest them.

On the second day of his visit to Bosnia, the special envoy conferred in the northern town of Tuzla with John Shalikashvili, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, and General Wesley Clark, NATO's Supreme commander in Europe.

No details emerged, but the message was clear: the allies are in earnest with threats against suspects like the Bosnian Serb war leader, Radovan Karadzic, formally barred from office, but who none the less wields huge influence from his stronghold of Pale, east of Sarajevo. Mr Holbrooke is the latest of

a series of high profile Western visitors, all of them with the aim of preventing the Dayton deal from unravelling. Thanks to the presence of NATO troops, the fighting has stopped, but a Bosnian state is as remote a prospect as ever.

Corruption is rife, progress towards common phone and aviation systems is far behind schedule, the symbols of statehood are virtually non-existent, and tribal hatreds constantly interfere with the return of war refugees to their former homes.

"If refugees aren't allowed to return, you will have a *de facto* division of Bosnia," Mr Holbrooke said after meeting Franjo Tudjman, the Croatian President, and the Muslim leader Alija Izetbegovic, in Split on Wednesday.

He has collected little more than promises, in this case a pledge by the Messrs Tudjman and Izetbegovic to prosecute any of their officials who had a role in the latest violence.

significant shorts

France holds ETA suspect

A Spaniard suspected of being the intelligence chief of the Basque separatist group ETA has been detained in southern France, police said yesterday. Igor Urrestarazu Garjo, a former policeman in the Spanish Basque region, was detained in Albi on Tuesday after a car chase and later taken to anti-terrorist police headquarters in Paris. Spanish police said Mr Urrestarazu began intelligence work for ETA in Guipuzcoa and took on a major role after he fled to France three years ago.

Reuters - Paris

Oil spill halts sea sports

Police banned swimming, boating and fishing in the waters off two Normandy towns after fuel spilled from a tanker entering Le Havre. The port was temporarily sealed off to stop the slick from spreading.

On Wednesday, a Bahamas registered tanker hit the docks while trying to enter Le Havre, spilling about 120 tons of fuel.

AP - Le Havre

New co-premier for Cambodia

Cambodian Foreign Minister Ung Huot was appointed first prime minister yesterday, replacing the ousted Prince Norodom Ranariddh.

Reuters - Phnom Penh

Girobank

Girobank announces that
with effect from
close of business
on 7 August 1997
its Base Rate was
increased from 6.75% to
7.00% per annum.

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Will the doomsters please look at the figures

The mongers of doom are making rather a lot of noise about the state of the economy. Another quarter-point rise in interest rates and some commentators paint a picture of industrial collapse, rising unemployment and mortgage repossessions. This stew of gloom is overdone to the point of being burnt to the bottom of the pan. Yes, if you are with the Cheltenham and Gloucester your £50,000 mortgage will cost £9 a month more as a result of yesterday's rise in interest rates (other lenders are waiting and seeing). And yes, it will have gone up by £47 a month since the election – although, in many cases, the blow is softened by the society's windfall payout at some point over the past year.

It is also true that exporters are squealing over our high interest rates, which have pushed the pound up to the sort of level that everyone agreed was totally unrealistic and unsustainable five years ago, when Britain was forced out of the European exchange rate mechanism. There is, of course, that advantage that if you are holidaying in France you can get 10 francs to the pound, which used to be a legend that grandfathers amazed small children with, along with amputations without anaesthetics and Labour governments – but that may not help all the people all the time.

And it is further true that we are in the middle of an overheated consumer boom of the kind that usually ends in

tears sooner or later – even though it is not fuelled by anything like the amount of borrowing which got people into trouble last time.

But look at the doomsters' case. Central is their criticism of Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for failing to take sufficiently bold action in his Budget to dampen consumer spending, leaving the authorities with the sole instrument of interest rates to control excessive growth in the economy. There is a pleasing symmetry to their argument. While the phrase "one-club golfer" was coined by Sir Edward Heath to describe Nigel Lawson's reliance on interest rates in the last boom, Mr Brown made it his own, and it formed the backbone of Labour's opposition to Conservative economic policy at this point in the last cycle. But symmetry is no substitute for analysis. The circumstances are not the same. And it is not true that Mr Brown is relying solely on interest rates, having conveniently shunted off both responsibility and blame for raising them to a newly independent Bank of England. Within the constraints of Labour's election pledges, Mr Brown raised taxes as much as he could in his Budget. In particular, the big increase in stamp duty on house sales over £100,000 and the advance notice of a further cut in the mortgage tax subsidy next April will help restrain house-price inflation. The wisdom of Labour's pledge not to raise income tax rates is being questioned re-



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respectively by City scribblers who want more cash taken out of consumers' pockets, and by Roy Hattersley, Labour's Lord Bountiful, who wants to give more to the poor. But it is too late now. Labour made that promise for the right reasons, and the electorate has endorsed it emphatically.

Gwyn Davies, one of the wisest of the City's wise persons, has written in our columns that if the Chancellor were to use taxes on the consumer as an economic lever, it would require massive rises to have any significant effect, and only then after a long lag. That was the reason for use of the tax system to fine-

tune the economy becoming discredited. The present clamour for such fiscal meddling is therefore puzzling.

Equally puzzling is the amount of attention that has been paid to the fact that there have now been as many as four rate rises since the election. But these have been quarter-point changes, and so the total rise since 1 May from 6 to 7 per cent amounts to a single percentage point, which itself was the standard unit of movement in the bad old days. It may not be comfortable for home-owners, but financially committed adults are surely old enough to remember when Norman Lamont put

rates up from 10 to 12 per cent in a day – and then threatened and withdrew a further rise to 15 per cent. The innovation of smaller but more frequent rate changes was one of the Conservatives' sensible responses to the uncertainty of economic futurology.

In any case, the criticism of the Government for hitting home-owners too hard contradicts the City lament that it has failed to clamp down hard enough on consumer spending. In his Budget speech, Mr Brown leant towards the City's concerns. Peter Lilley, the shadow Chancellor, yesterday had the disgraceful cheek to criticise Mr Brown for "doing nothing to persuade people to save their building society windfalls", when action to stem the piggy-bank cascade was considered and rejected by the Tory government because it was desperate to stoke the feel-good factor before the election.

That is why interest rates have to rise now, but the rise in the pound that higher rates have encouraged may well obviate the need for further rises. What the advocates of fiscal fine-tuning seem to have overlooked is the dramatic deflationary effect of having the pound back up near the DM3 level which has been such a benchmark in recent British economic history. Still, we should not swing too far in the opposite direction. Manufacturing exporters are bound to complain, and loudly, that they are being driven to the wall, forced to lay off

workers and that recession is around the corner. But it should be remembered that they are in the minority.

Besides, by hinting that yesterday's rise was the last for the time being, thereby causing the pound to drop sharply on the foreign exchanges, the Bank of England might have managed to achieve exactly the policy mix that was required: higher interest rates and a lower pound.

The end of Life as we know it?

Good news for those who think there is too much filth on stage and screen. Last night saw the last episode of the cult soap *This Life*, with its high bank rating. At the same time, the Reduced Shakespeare Company is ending its run of a play called *Shopping and Fucking* (good news for all those papers that have agonised over whether to print the full title). What is more, it is replacing it with a performance of *The Bible: The Complete Word of God (Abridged)*, which runs to 100 minutes, which suggests to a sceptical mind that further abridgement is possible. Before Mary Whitehouse breaks open the Applepie, however, she should note that the playwright responsible for *S&F*, Mark Ravenhill, is being touted as a scriptwriter for the next series of *This Life*. So he will have to drop the shopping, then.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Fair reward for all good teachers

Sir: The Government's proposal to pay enhanced salaries to "superteachers" can only be viewed as a silly gimmick in the context of the continuing inequalities in pay and other rewards in the system as a whole. If, as you say ("You can't afford to pay peanuts, Mr Blunkett", 6 August), "more money has to be part of the solution", is it too much to ask that further education lecturers of 16-19-year-olds share in this educational windfall?

Since 1993, lecturers in Britain's colleges whose conditions of service transferred from their former LEA employers have had their pay completely frozen. This was a government-inspired decision to force them to transfer to inferior contracts involving longer hours in the class room, fewer holidays and the requirement to teach more students with diminished resources. These staff include a fair percentage among their number that could qualify for the proposed new "advanced skills grade". They are unlikely to benefit from Mr Blunkett's proposals however, since their pay will remain frozen.

The situation for non-teaching managers in the further education sector could not be more different. Salary levels for Principals and other non-teaching senior staff have never been better. At over £80,000 per annum, plus perks such as cars, expense accounts and interest-free loans, the salary packages of these senior staff put those of the Prime Minister and Education Secretary in the shade.

The job requirements of all teachers and lecturers have changed and will continue to change over the years. A committee of inquiry, into pay, conditions of service, career development and prospects for all teachers, is the only way that a broad consensus can be reached on the future of the education service which is seen properly to reward good teachers while motivating all to reach for higher standards.

DAVID ROBINSON
National Officer
Lecturers' Employment Advice and Action Fellowship
Thorpe Bay, Essex

Sir: You make the assertion (Leading article, 6 August) that higher pay for teachers would result in more good teachers being recruited. This is only true up to a point.

Most teachers are not in it for the money; they are dedicated professionals, and those people whose interest is half-hearted are steered away from teaching by the poor pay.

The downside of higher pay for teachers ("Top pay plan for super teachers", 6 August) might be that those less-dedicated individuals, who had up until now been dissuaded by the low pay, find that they are interested in teaching simply because the remuneration is higher.

Obviously I am not against higher pay for teachers; it is well known that over the last 20 years teachers' pay has not increased as much as comparable jobs in industry. As a newly qualified teacher, my first year's pay is not going to be particularly impressive. I am most certainly not in it for the money.

IAN HERRIES
Leeds



Disabled actors deserve a chance

Sir: Thomas Sutcliffe is wrong on several counts (Tabloid: "Last night", 4 August). Channel 4's new sitcom, *House Gang*, was never intended to "confront discrimination", nor is its primary purpose educational.

This series is in the best tradition of Aussie soap/sitcom – it's lightweight, a little tacky, but it's also warm, entertaining and engaging. Yes, the acting might be stilted in places, the script a little rough around the edges, but these are wrinkles that can be ironed out in the second series.

In his desperate attempts to write a sweetly reasonable, politically correct review Mr Sutcliffe misses the point, which is that *House Gang* is groundbreaking television: for the first time people with disabilities are portrayed in a mainstream sitcom and – wow – they are not the usual stereotypical type, the superheroes battling against the odds, the bitter self-pitying no-hopers, the villains or the bad guys.

Trev, Belinda and Robert are, as Mr Sutcliffe concedes, "competent" and "sassy". They are fully rounded characters, in control of their lives, and throughout the series they are shown coping with ordinary everyday ups and downs, traumas and irritations that anyone – disabled or not – might encounter when sharing a house.

Disabled people are tired of always being defined by disability, medical condition or narrow doorways. Most disabled people are disabled by attitudes, not physical barriers, and all we want is to be given the same chances in life

as everyone else – including the chance to train for, to audition for, and to perform in mainstream drama on the same terms as able-bodied actors. And that means the same terms, Mr Sutcliffe – so you reckon *House Gang* is one of the worst-acted, least funny comedies ever broadcast? Where have you been looking? I've seen many more terrible performances gracing our screens – all of them from able-bodied actors and writers.

Nobody out there is writing scripts that include disabled characters, nobody is casting disabled actors in sitcoms or soaps, or any other type of drama. The Aussies were determined enough to do it for themselves. I'm proud that Channel 4 gave its support to their determination and now I'm waiting for British writers to follow their lead.

ALISON WALSH
Disability Consultant
Channel 4
London SW1

Enforce law for young drinkers

Sir: I was not surprised to read that the J.D. Wetherspoon pub chain, after carefully checking it would not hit their profits, has succumbed to the latest moral panic and is banning alcohol from its pubs ("Pub group calls time on alcopops as more companies join ban", 5 August). It is an easy way out of dealing with the real problem of under-age drinking, where

currently the police, off-licences and publicans are colluding together to allow the law to be flouted with impunity.

Go into any city or town on a Friday or Saturday night and you can see the 15-18 age group being served in pubs and 13 and 14-year-olds drinking outside McDonald's or its local analogue. Law without enforcement is as much use as a bicycle to a fish.

When did your local paper last report a publican convicted for serving an under-age drinker? This would do more to reduce alcohol consumption amongst the young. The current campaign is about as useful as dealing with road safety by getting Lada dealers to promise not to sell Ferraris to their customers.

GLYN FORD MEP
(Lab, Greater Manchester East)
Mossley
Lancashire

Missing monarch

Sir: If Pru Irvine's grandmother is 104 (Tabloid: "When Mummy dearest hits 100", 6 August), she has lived in six reigns – not the five asserted by Pru.

Queen Victoria was proud of her record 64 years on the British throne. She would not have been amused to have been forgotten by Pru, who, at 40, has lived – so far – under only one monarch (albeit one with an eye firmly fixed on "the old queen's" record).

IAN McWILLIAM-FOWLER
Rochdale, Greater Manchester

Praying for the right service

Sir: Your correspondents the Rev Simon Reed (Letters, 30 July) and the Rev Dr Stephen Cherry (Letters, 1 August) assert that many ministers of religion render "true and rewarding" funerals and listen "carefully and skilfully" to those arranging funerals.

No doubt this is true in many cases, but the Prayer Book Society often hears complaints that some vicars totally disregard requests made to them for church funerals according to the Book of Common Prayer.

Nor does the problem apply only to funerals. In one parish where a Book of Common Prayer marriage service had been expressly stipulated, the incumbent embarked on an alternative, modern form of service. It is impossible to overstate the distress this caused to members of the families concerned.

It needs to be more widely known that at the "occasional services", ie baptisms, marriages and funerals, it is the legal right of the families concerned to stipulate for a service according to the Book of Common Prayer, or the Alternative Services Book, and the legal duty of the priest to meet their needs. Otherwise, the church is short-changing its customers.

MARGOT THOMPSON
Prayer Book Society
London EC4

Qualified to be a hero

Sir: I am entirely in agreement with Captain Jones, the pilot of the aircraft which force landed at Manchester Airport ("Hero pilot fights shy of praise", 7 August).

If he is a hero, as the media and others maintain, it does not say very much for the training and proficiency of British Airways pilots. They rightly describe the incident as routine emergency drill. The one wheel landing was within the competence of any qualified airline or air force pilot and to suggest otherwise smacks wrongly damage people's confidence in British Airways.

CANON PAUL GODDARD
(Ex RAF pilot)
Petrin-by-Fowey, Cornwall

Border incidents

Sir: Space may well be the final frontier, as Captain Kirk used to say, but the River Tamar surely can't be the "oldest frontier in Europe", as the errant Paul Valley would have us believe, if it is

borderline credentials were only established in the 9th century ("A Journey Around the Whole Island of Great Britain", 6 August). "Iacta alea est", quoth Julius Caesar as he crossed the Rubicon – and the boundary dividing republican loyalty from imperial ambition – and that was in 49BC. And, while we're talking crossings, what about the time the Red Sea divided for those fleeing Israelites. Another international border incident surely?

KATIE TEARLE
Lewes, East Sussex

Feeling relaxed on £70 a week

Sir: Robin Basak's dismay over the call for increased financial help for the unemployed (Letters, 6 August) is understandable. It must be bitter indeed to support a wife and two children on £420 per month, only to discover that he is in fact less well off than the unemployed of whom he is so critical.

Happily, at the end of the century, the vast majority of us can choose to be slaves to a mortgage, or to allow the state to support us. Mr Basak has the choice to continue being righteous about his poverty, or he could become unemployed. In doing so, he would have the interest on his mortgage as well as his council tax paid. He would have been able to get a grant for the bed that it took him two years to save up for. He would be able to spend more time with his family.

I live on state benefits of £70 a week. This doesn't allow me to pay my bills, buy new clothes for myself or my child, go on holiday, eat much more than vegetables.

However, I can spend relaxed, meaningful time with my family and friends, learn to use computers, create pottery, and most important to me, avoid the mindless commute to and from a hot, power-struggle-infested workplace.

The price I pay for not working is endless poverty. The price Mr Basak and other low-paid workers pay for being employed is endless poverty and exhaustion. It may not be fair, but it's the way it is, and both of us have made a choice.

CLARE PROUT
London W10

Casting for a white Othello

Sir: David Lister's article ("Can it be wrong to 'black up' for Othello?", 7 August) about casting Othello attributes the reluctance of theatre companies to cast white actors in the role to political correctness.

In America, the home of political correctness, there have been experiments with casting black actors as Iago as well as Othello. But the most radical solution so far will be tried next month in Washington at the Shakespeare Theatre, probably America's finest Shakespeare company. Patrick Stewart will play Othello, but he will be the only white actor in the cast. It may strike some as nothing more than a gimmick, but as a way of exploring how race functions in the play it seems to me a brilliant idea.

PETER HOLLAND
Trinity Hall, Cambridge

Olden Delicious

Sir: Your article on gene-manipulation of apples (2 August) left a taste in my mouth worse than that of a French Golden Delicious.

I have pleasant memories of the days (before the EEC) when Golden Delicious were delicious: honey-sweet, fragrant, easy to eat and a treat. I don't think my children know what an apple tastes like; they refuse to eat them.

You say that the National Fruit Collection at Brogdale houses a massive resource of "more than 4,000 varieties", my apples of 30 years ago must be there somewhere. Why aren't we using them?

JOANNA CLARKE
Glasgow

analysis

A strike at the heart of Nirvana

Low inflation, full employment, record stock markets – but, says Mary Dejevsky, American workers are footing the bill. Are they about to stop paying?

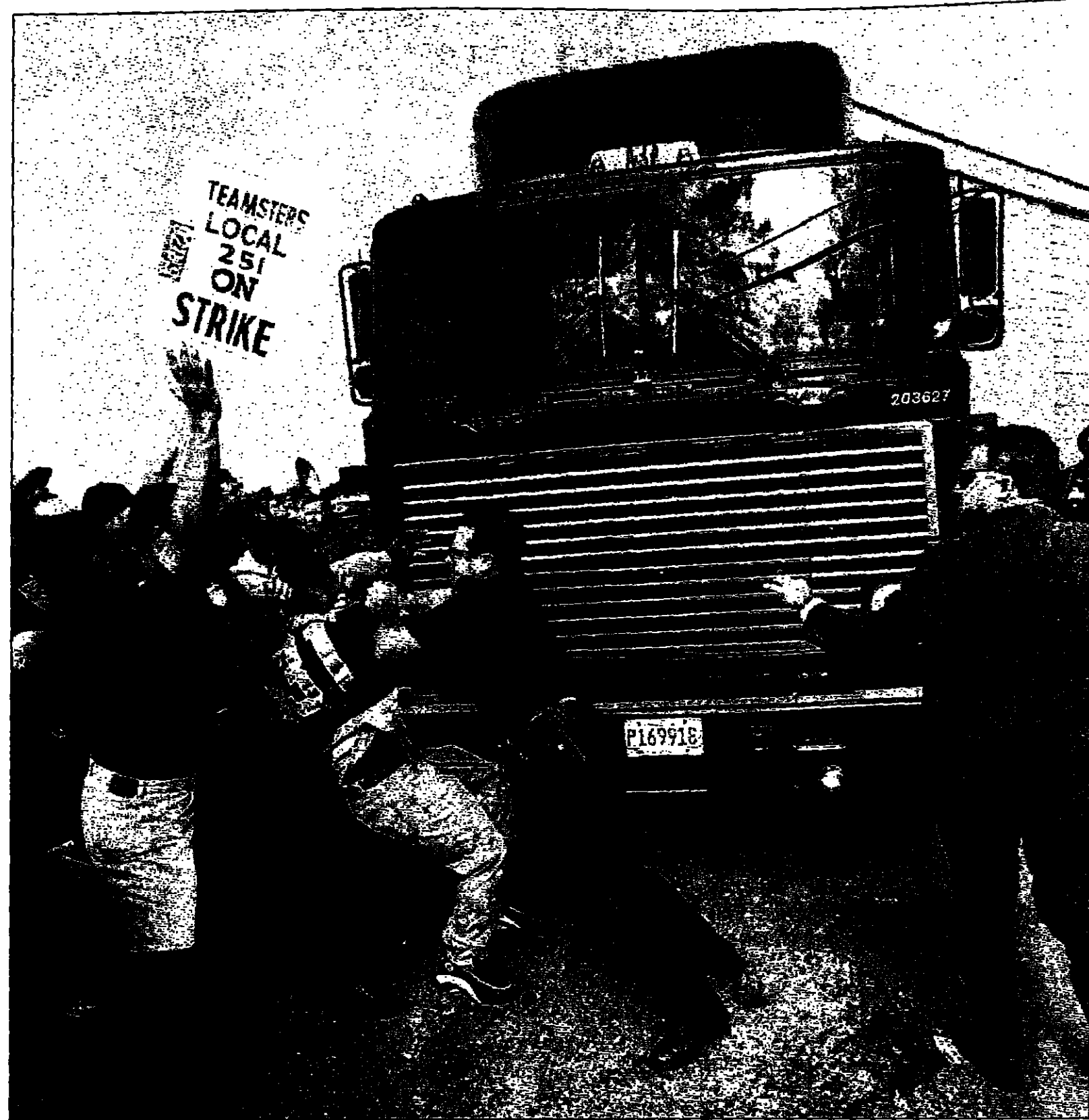
The United States, which is currently acknowledged to have the strongest and soundest economy in the industrialised world, has, since Monday, been in the grip of its biggest strike for 14 years. The transport and courier company, United Parcel Service, whose ubiquitous brown vans with their sublimated gilt lettering deliver 80 per cent of the US small package freight, is at a standstill. Some 190,000 unionised workers – two-thirds of the workforce – have withdrawn their labour; more than 12 million packages and mail-ordered goods (which, because of the distances and paucity of local shops in the US, account for a massive volume of business) are piled up in depots. An estimated 5 per cent of the country's gross national product, according to UPS, is "not moving".

In the US, as in Britain, a strike of this magnitude and disruptive potential seems a historical throwback to a pre-

Thatcher, pre-Reagan era – before unions were tamed, managers learnt to manage, and workers understood that times had changed. And this is one way the UPS strike is viewed: as an aberration, a last gasp of the Teamsters, one of the few strong trade unions in the US, in one of the few sectors – haulage – where it still has clout. If this is true, the strike will be short-lived, a little more of the Teamsters' remaining power will have been spent, and the strikers – with a few meagre gains and much lost pay – will return to work, grateful still to have a job.

But another interpretation is also possible. According to this, the UPS strike would not be a vestige of the past, but a harbinger of the future and a warning that not all is as right with the country's economy as mainstream economic analysts and most US politicians would have us believe.

At present, the very strength of the economy seems to argue against this. Over the past year,



The price of economic growth? Two-thirds of UPS staff are striking over pay in the biggest US dispute for 14 years. Photograph: AP

it is growing towards former welfare recipients who are increasingly being made to work for their benefits, for pay which works out at less than the minimum wage. Again, despite official denials and insistence that safeguards are in place, there is evidence of a "displacement" effect, with employers letting full-timers go because "workfare" recipients are cheaper. Mr Clinton's call for states to ensure that this does not happen indicates that the situation is far from satisfactory. Overall, there is the likelihood of increased sullenness in the low-paid, unskilled workforce that could impair productivity, quality and reliability.

These are not the only dangers that may be foreshadowed by the UPS strike. The cause of the protest – low wages and growing "casualisation" of the workforce – illustrates that the supposedly perfect balance of the economy is, in fact, precarious. If labour becomes even scarcer, wages may have to increase, with the accompanying risk of higher inflation. If, as a result, production costs rise, companies – reluctant to cut profits – could decide to cut staff. Despite all the "downsizing" of the past decade, there still seems plenty of slack in many sectors compared with Britain.

More people have been employed in the US, up until now, in part because hiring and firing is easier and unskilled wages are low. But productivity (per employed worker) is also relatively low. Despite new technology, it has not increased nearly as rapidly in the past 25 years as it has in Europe. This discrepancy, which has tended to be masked by different methods of calculating productivity – with Europe counting only those employed and the US counting everyone of working age – is suddenly the subject of much specialist debate in the US.

If there is another wave of "downsizing" – and this was the cause of the recent General Motors strike – unemployment could also rise. This might not just damage the economic picture; it could also sorely test the welfare reforms whose success so far has relied on the economic boom and the availability of jobs.

These are hypothetical scenarios. The US economy may continue to boom, companies and consumers may continue to benefit from cheap imports and cheap labour, and low-paid workers may have no choice but to accept what they are given and strive, in the all-American way, for something better. What the UPS strike does illustrate, however, is that the economic boom has not spread its largesse nearly as widely as is often believed and that a small push from below could bring its Nirvana-dreaming economists crashing back to earth.

the US has achieved a combination of positive indicators that had hitherto been regarded as virtually impossible for any developed country. Unemployment falls by the month and is currently at its lowest since November 1973. Welfare rolls are also falling as rules in many states are tightened. The inflation rate, meanwhile, is negligible and – despite repeated predictions to the contrary – still shows no sign of budging. Interest rates are at their lowest for many years, encouraging mortgage borrowing and consumer spending. Company profits are by and large at record levels, so are exports, and the dollar is strong

against all major currencies.

Perhaps the most surprising indicator has been share prices, which are still breaking records almost daily. As they rise, one analyst or other would forecast that they could go no higher – but they did. And now, the word is that they could rise higher still. The logic is that there are simply no serious negative factors to dent market confidence. On top of all this, President Clinton has just finalised an agreement with Congress, which has a Republican majority, on a budget plan designed to help the boom continue and eliminate the domestic budget deficit by the year 2002.

All in all, the US economy in 1997 seems to many to have reached a state akin to Nirvana, where all the variables are in balance, harmony prevails, and each positive indicator reinforces the other. So strong does the US economy appear, that even the professional Eynore of the financial establishment, the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, Alan Greenspan, was compelled to sound a rare note of optimism when he appeared before a Congressional committee last month – helping to push the stock market even higher.

Perversely, it seems that only a surfeit of good news is capable of clouding the picture, and that only temporarily. The last unemployment figures, which showed a further fall to a

national rate of 4.8 per cent, caused a brief fall in the stock market as, not for the first time, dealers feared that a shortage of labour could increase wages and so inflation.

The stock market, though, may have a point. It is pay, or at least one aspect of pay, that lies behind the UPS strike, and this is why the strike could be at least as much a pointer to the future as a throwback to the past.

UPS workers are protesting about the increasing use by UPS of part-time, temporary staff, who are paid half as much as full-time employees and qualify for fewer benefits, including the all-important health insurance. The Teamsters union wants UPS to increase the number of full-time jobs and improve benefits for part-timers. Behind the demand is not just the issue of fairness, but the fear of full-time employees that UPS will reduce its full-time payroll and make up the numbers with part-timers, who comprise 35 per cent of workers.

UPS says that it needs the flexibility of part-time working. It also says that pay for part-timers, at just short of \$10 an hour, almost twice the minimum wage, is respectable. (Full-timers earn twice that.) But although UPS is regarded as a good employer, a single breadwinner would still find it difficult to support a family on this salary. For a part-timer

working – as the full-timers claim – almost full-time hours, it is impossible – especially as the temporary nature of the employment makes it difficult for the individual to obtain a mortgage or any other form of the credit on which so many Americans run their lives.

The workers' complaints are sharpened by the contradiction they perceive between their own situation and the paeans to the US economy (as well as record company profits), they hear and read of every day. Essentially, inflation remains low, in part, because wages – despite the very low unemployment rate – are barely rising, and they are rising least of all for the lowest paid.

This is producing a groundswell of resentment and a readiness to strike that is uncommon for the US. Last month, General Motors had to suspend work at several plants because of a strike by parts manufacturers over layoffs. The company's policy of "just in time" production, where a minimum of components are stored, made the strike more effective than it might have been in the past, and a settlement was agreed within days.

Optimists about the US economy stress that the car and haulage industries are unusual in having strong unions and that widespread labour unrest is highly unlikely. The recent tightening of welfare regulations will make unem-

ployment even harder to bear than it was before, so most low-paid workers will probably just grin and bear it.

This will not, however, prevent frustrations being vented in other ways – none of which would be good either for the social climate or the prosperity of the US. There is already a tendency to blame immigrants (legal and illegal, and mainly from south of the border) for depressing wages, a trend that brought the referendum vote in California two years ago to abolish benefits – including health and education – for children of illegal immigrants. This year the same tendency almost caused legal immigrants to be excluded from health benefits until they became US citizens.

The much-contested North American Free Trade Agreement – NAFTA – is also being blamed, for having encouraged US manufacturers to shift production to Mexico where labour is cheaper, so reducing wages in the US, especially in border areas. The official Administration line is that NAFTA has had no perceptible effect on wages in the US. Figures supplied by states bordering Mexico, however, tell a different story, and – even as President Clinton was celebrating his "balanced budget" agreement with Congress – he quietly signed over additional financial assistance to those states to safeguard jobs.

Elsewhere in the US, hostil-

Barclays Bank PLC.

Interest Rates for Business Customers, Charities and Societies with effect from 7th August 1997.

ACCOUNT TITLE	GROSS RATE (%P.A.)	NET RATE (%P.A.)
BUSINESS PREMIUM ACCOUNT. (Rates also apply to Farmers Premium Account) – instant access.		
£250,000 +	4.250	3.400
£100,000 – £249,999	4.125	3.300
£25,000 – £99,999	3.875	3.100
£2,000 – £24,999	3.375	2.700
£100 – £1,999	3.000	2.400
HIGH INTEREST BUSINESS ACCOUNT – 14 days' notice.		
£250,000 +	5.625	4.500
£100,000 – £249,999	5.500	4.400
£25,000 – £99,999	5.250	4.200
£10,000 – £24,999	4.750	3.800
£2,000 – £9,999	4.000	3.200
CLIENT'S PREMIUM ACCOUNT		
£1 million +	5.000	4.000
£250,000 – £999,999	4.875	3.900
£100,000 – £249,999	4.750	3.800
£25,000 – £99,999	4.375	3.500
£10,000 – £24,999	4.125	3.300
BARCLAYS COMMUNITY ACCOUNT. (An interest bearing current account for clubs, charities, churches and societies.) No minimum balance.		
£25,000+	2.875	2.300
£10,000 – £24,999	2.375	1.900
£5,000 – £9,999	1.875	1.500
£0 – £4,999	1.625	1.300
SEVEN DAY DEPOSIT ACCOUNT. (A seven days' notice account.) No minimum balance.		
	0.500	0.400

*GROSS RATE is the contractual rate of interest payable net taking account of the deduction of income tax at the lower rate.
 **NET RATE is the rate which would be payable after allowing for the deduction of income tax at the lower rate. The Tax Deduction Scheme for Investors (TDS) may vary and, therefore, the net rate is given as an illustration only. The rate will only be deducted in those cases where the Bank is obliged to do so.
 Interest rates quoted are subject to variation. For further information on these or any other services please contact your local Barclays branch or Business Centre who will be pleased to help.



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Superfluous maybe, but very highly specified

Last Sunday the Innovations mail-order catalogue dropped out of the surrounding newspaper and on to the floor, with a pleasant and inviting thwack. So I threw the paper away (who wants to read yet another bloody cult-trailing article about *This Life* anyway), and read the catalogue. Soon I was lost in another, better world – in which any problem – no matter how small – could be solved.

"A breakthrough in home treatment of spots and cold sores?" I read. In the accompanying picture is something long and knobby, with a red bit at the end; something looking remarkably like ET's healing finger. So tell us, catalogue, what does it do, exactly? Well, it "employs the bio-stimulating effects of low-intensity narrow-band light at a wavelength of precisely 660 nanometres in order to stimulate fibroblast proliferation and mediators of wound repair and inflammatory process healing". Sorry? "In layman's terms it is designed to have a beneficial effect on facial spots." And it only costs

£29.95. Which is an amazing bargain for something that is probably done in hospitals with a machine costing two million quid.

What's next? "The height of glove technology". Yes, now I can see why the Explorer currently bumbling about on Mars is the height of space technology. But what is meant by "glove technology"? Well, these particular gloves are made out of special substances, cunningly bonded together. There is Tassan (as worn in CS Lewis books, presumably), a "layer of FORELLE", and – finally – a stratum of "Thinsulate – the advanced thermal insulator". Put them together, and you have something equally handy whether dog-sledding in Greenland or putting out the rubbish on a cold day. Which brings us on to "Maximum performance outdoor headwear", a slightly nerdy looking object which is "technically specified for seriously chilly polar conditions" (thus distinguishing itself from caps that function only in frivolous chilliness), and is constructed out of "Tactel fabric, coated with Rainlife 2000 and



David Aaronovitch

proofed with Teflon water repellent". It is, in short, the height of cap technology. Just the thing for the garden.

In which, alas, if you are forgetful, you may be forced to stay. But no, "Never get locked out again," it says. Aha, what's this? A key fob that – should you accidentally leave it inside the house, and find yourself on the outside (safely protected by layers of Thinsulate and Tactel) – will respond to a whistle by climbing out of the letterbox and returning itself to you? Nope. It is an outdoor thermometer which, when

you push the top, slides open to reveal a compartment within which your spare keys are hidden. Simple!

But hold on a moment. This catalogue is only seen by about five squillion people, some of whom are likely to be burglars, or to know burglars. Pretty soon the information that thermometers are being used as handy places for hiding the keys to houses stuffed full of jewellery, videos and tempting catalogue products, will be common knowledge in the prisons and hostels. Giving up their hunt under bricks, stones and gnomes, Britain's housebreakers will zero in on the thermometers.

The resulting mercury-busting crime-wave would piss almost everybody off: those who already hide their keys in their thermometers, those who have thermometers with no keys in them, and those who buy thermometers especially to put their keys in. Which is why the manufacturers have fitted the key compartment with a three-digit combination lock. And all those very absent-minded folk – who habitually shut themselves out of their houses – have to do is to

remember the three digits. Or – if they should forget – to hide a slip of paper, with the numbers written on, somewhere near the door. In a thermometer, perhaps.

Meanwhile I hope others will enjoy the "use anywhere Mini Backstretcher" (just lie down with this carefully crafted beechwood appliance in the bus, tube, cinema or aeroplane), will benefit from the "efficient and hygienic blackhead removal" gadget, take comfort from the Denpak NightGuard which fits into your mouth and stops you grinding your teeth at night, and will economise by getting the most out of their tubes of toothpaste with the "Squeezit".

And, before you ask, yes, I have bought stuff from this catalogue myself before. It's just that my purchases were more sensible and practical than many of the items that I have mentioned. My partner agrees that she has benefited enormously from the "one-eye-at-a-time" make-up glasses, with their independently hinged, flip-up lenses. Which "fold away like normal specs when not in use".

Miles Kingston is on holiday

مكتبة الامارات

business & city

FINANCIAL JOURNAL
OF THE YEARBusiness news desk: tel 0171-293 2636 fax 0171-293 2098
DEPUTY BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR: MICHAEL HARRISONMarkets welcome rise
in base rates to 7%Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

The financial markets were surprised, but pleased by the Bank of England's decision to raise interest rates by a quarter point to 7 per cent yesterday. Industry, though, condemned the move, and a new round of mortgage rate increases is likely to hit home-buyers.

It was not so much the increase, which was widely expected, as the strong hint in the statement from the Monetary Policy Committee that rates have gone far enough for now that pleased the City.

It took the pound four pence lower against the German mark to below DM2.97. Sterling's index against a range of currencies fell by 1.1 points to 302.8.

Share prices soared for the second day running, with the FTSE 100 index closing nearly 61 points higher at 5,086.8. The index has gained 642 points, or 14 per cent, since 1 May.

The Bank's statement yesterday said the appreciation of the pound during the past year had put "severe pressure on

businesses exposed to international competition". It added: "Upward pressures on the exchange rate should be reduced by the perception that interest rates have reached a level consistent with the inflation target."

"They didn't mince their words. Rates will not rise again for the time being," said Adam Cole at James Capel.

Some analysts said further increases in the cost of borrowing would occur, but not until the Bank had clear new evidence the economy was expanding at an unsustainable pace. "You can not conclude interest rates have reached their peak, but there

will be a pause," said Kevin Darlington at ABN-Amro. Simon Briscoe at Nikko Europe said yesterday's move was unnecessary, but he added: "It will do little damage to the economy. What is important is that rates are now on hold."

However, in contrast to the acclaim from the City, the reaction from industry and unions was far more negative.

Kate Barker, chief economist at the CBI, said the employers' organisation was concerned that the latest rise would exacerbate the problems faced by exporters. But she said: "I am pleased the Bank has signalled

there will be no further move." The British Chambers of Commerce also welcomed the signal, but described yesterday's decision as a "body blow" to business.

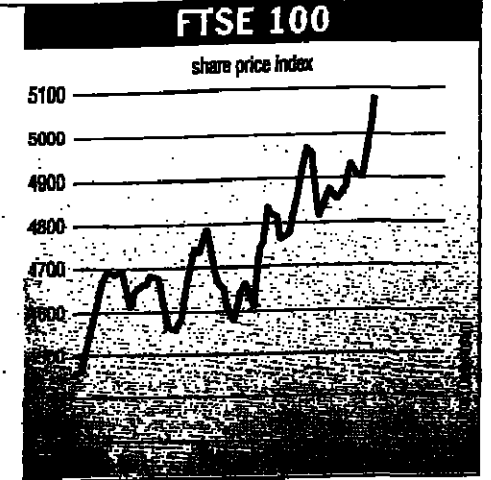
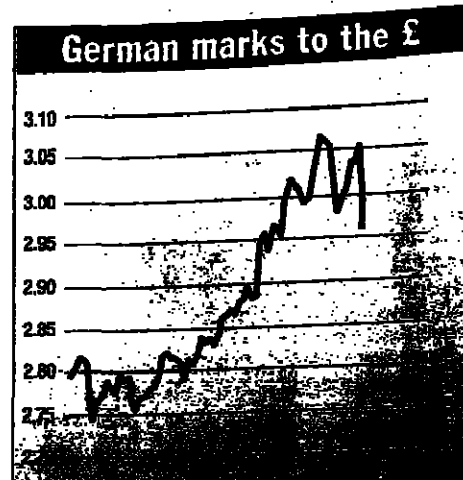
Ian Peters, deputy director-general, said: "The Bank should assess the combined effects of lower import prices, falling wage inflation, the Chancellor's Budget measures and previous rises in interest rates, before making any further increases."

Meanwhile, the Engineering Employers' Federation warned of the risk of job cuts as a result of the strong pound. A spokesman said: "We feel

there is an increased likelihood of job losses being announced throughout the autumn period."

The Construction Confederation warned the latest increase ran the risk of damaging the construction recovery. "The whole industry will be affected if the economic recovery is weakened too much," said Ian Deslandes, its chief executive.

Interest rates have now risen by 1 per cent to 7 per cent since the general election. Three of these moves have been made by the Bank of England under the new arrangements which give it control over interest rate decisions.



The Bank said yesterday that the latest increase was "necessary to put the economy on track for achieving the inflation target of 2.5 per cent looking two years ahead". Although it recognised the "severe pressure" the strong pound was placing on exporters, it said the prospects for growth in domestic demand made the quarter point increase necessary.

A new survey of business on

the high street by the CBI revealed a slight slowdown in the growth of retail sales last month.

Although the monthly survey has not matched official figures for retail sales very closely in recent months, a small fall in the balance of retailers reporting higher sales volumes reassured economists that consumer demand has probably not accelerated again. The CBI said

underlying sales growth was strong and stable.

Cheltenham & Gloucester was the first mortgage lender to increase its loan rate, with an announcement following swiftly on the Bank of England's statement yesterday. Others said they would consider their position, but many are expected to follow suit. However, C&G simultaneously announced an increase in rates for savers. The carpetbagging habit has made deposits extremely footloose, and competition in the savings market is stiff.

Britannia Building Society yesterday announced an increase in its rates for savers from Monday but kept mortgage rates unchanged.

Halifax said it did not intend to make any immediate announcement but would review the situation. Lenders also took a day or two to react to the interest rate increase in July.

Comment, page 21

Strong sterling assaults Reed Elsevier and Zeneca

Reed Elsevier, the Anglo-Dutch publishing combine, and Zeneca, the giant drugs group, yesterday became the latest companies to reveal the scars left by the soaring pound, ironically on the day that the currency slipped back through the DM3 barrier, writes Magnus Grimond.

Reed said virtually all its first half profits had been wiped out by the effects of currency and forecast a hit in the rest of the year close to the £36m sustained so far. Zeneca, part of a sector whose shares have soared this year on hopes that it will provide a safe haven from economic storms, saw its first half prof-

its growth more than halved as the rampant pound reduced the value of earnings arising from overseas.

Shares in both groups suffered early on, with Reed closing down 40p at 590p, wiping \$455m from its market value, and Zeneca losing 49p at one stage, before recovering to end

up 6p at £20.52. Both underperformed a market buoyed by a further fall in the pound, which sank decisively through DM3 to end around 3.3 pence.

That boosted exporters and foreign earners in the manufacturing sector, notably LucasVarity, up 11.5p at 208.5p, BTR, which

rose 10.5p to 197p, Rolls-Royce, which put on 13p at 256p, and ICI, where the shares added 42.5p to £11.05.

Separately, Zeneca revealed that its 10 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £669m in the six months to June would have been 22 per cent had it not been for the effects of the pound.

John Mayo, the finance director who is shortly leaving to join GEC, said sales were some £300m lower and operating profits \$90m less due to the effects of the pound. He gave

warning that its continuing strength in the second half could hit margins.

Investment column, page 23

MMC chief quits
as shake-up begins

Michael Harrison

A wide-ranging shake-up of competition policy was under way yesterday after the Government announced details of its new Competition Commission and Sir Graeme Odgers resigned from his £120,000-a-year post as chairman of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Sir Graeme's surprise decision will force the Government to find a new chairman for the Competition Commission since Sir Graeme would have transferred into the job when the authority comes into operation next year and takes over the functions of the MMC.

However Sir Graeme, 63, told the President of the Board of Trade, Margaret Beckett, that he had decided to return to the private sector rather than serving out the remainder of his term, which was not due to expire until April 1999.

His intention to quit the MMC after just over four years in the job was known to Mrs

Beckett's predecessor, Ian Lang, but the announcement was delayed first by the General Election and then by Labour's review of competition policy.

The Competition Bill published yesterday by Mrs Beckett will beef up the Office of Fair Trading, giving it the power to crack down on cartels and anti-competitive agreements by fining companies up to 10 per cent of their turnover.

As well as taking over the MMC's job of vetting takeovers and mergers, the Competition Commission will also act as a tribunal to hear appeals against penalties imposed by the OFT. The Restrictive Practices Court will be disbanded.

Mrs Beckett said she had accepted Sir Graeme's resignation with considerable regret.

Sir Graeme stressed that he supported the changes being introduced by Mrs Beckett and had only decided to leave so that he could end his career back in the private sector. He is looking for a non-executive chairmanship but stressed: "I have

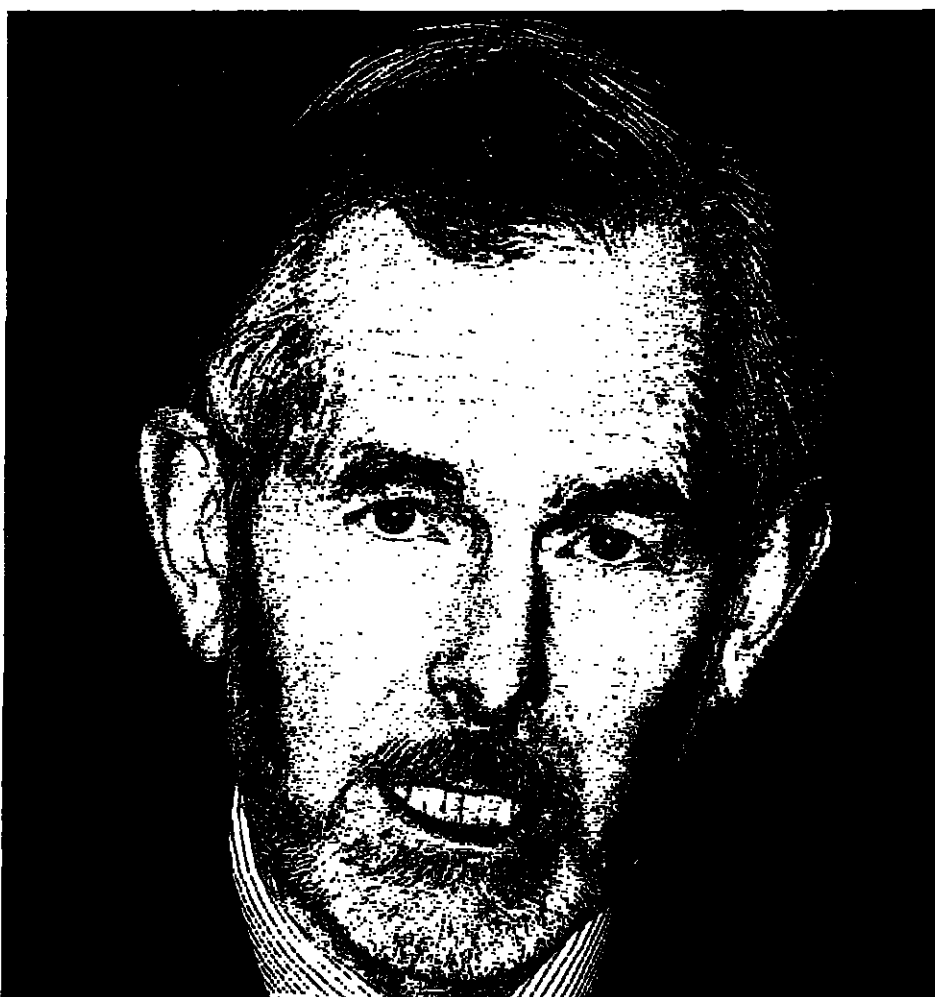
not put out any feelers yet, nor has anybody approached me."

Sir Graeme arrived at the MMC in April 1993 after a career spent in the construction and telecommunications industry, culminating in the chief executive's job at Alfred McAlpine. It was only last October that he agreed to a two-year extension of his term from April this year.

But Sir Graeme said that in the months that followed he became convinced that if he was to get a job back in the private sector, he would have to leave the MMC before he reached 65.

During his tenure the MMC has handled 68 referrals, of which 54 have been published. Its advice has been ignored by the government four times - GEC's takeover of VSEL, which the MMC recommended be blocked, the two generators' bids for regional electricity companies and the Bass-Cardiff Teley merger, which the MMC cleared, and the break-up of British Gas's trading and pipeline arms, which was rejected.

Comment, page 21



Sir Graeme Odgers: Said he wanted to finish his career in the private sector

Shares soar as
Barclays raises
buy-backsTom Stevenson
Financial Editor

Barclays' shares soared yesterday after the bank reported higher first-half profits and told investors it had £200m more to spend on share buy-backs this year than it had previously thought. The group will buy in £700m of shares this year rather than the £500m it promised shareholders six months ago.

The shares reached a high of £14.65, a gain of 137.5p, before closing at £14.47, 119.5p up on the day. In line with other financial stocks, they have soared recently as the stock market has reappraised the prospects for banking profits in the current low-inflation environment.

Reported profits for the six months to June were flat at £127m, but before a one-off hit to the bank's leasing activities from a change in the rate of corporation tax there was an underlying 8 per cent increase. The figures were in line with expectations, as was a 17 per cent increase in the dividend to 13.5p.

Analysts were taken aback by the surge in the share price, which added almost 10 per cent to the value of the bank. It followed big jumps in the past week from HSBC and Lloyds TSB after they reported better than expected first-half results.

Martin Taylor, chief executive, said the decision to increase the scale of this year's buy-backs reflected a stronger capital position than six months ago when he had made a prudent assessment of the bank's excess funds. Barclays has already bought

back £290m of shares, leaving £410m still to come, and has returned £1.75bn to shareholders over the past two years.

One of the features of the figures was a sharp improvement at BZW, the investment banking division where profits collapsed in the second half of last year. Although below the £145m achieved in the first six months of 1996, the £124m interim profit compared favourably with the £42m in yesterday's second half.

Profits would have been almost as good as last year's first half were it not for a £20m loss on equity derivatives trading in the run up to the Budget. Changes to the rules on dividend tax credits hit contracts which had been written on the basis of the previous rules.

Mr Taylor was upbeat about prospects for BZW, following an improvement in its return on capital from 8 to 12 per cent. Earlier this week, rival NatWest Markets reported a 2.4 per cent return on its equity.

He insisted there was more to go for at the equities, markets and investment banking operation, and set a target return of 20 per cent for the business. The division has been radically overhauled since chief executive Bill Harrison arrived from Robert Fleming last year, with all three of its main operations now under new leadership.

Elsewhere, personal and business banking both grew strongly. Personal banking benefited from consumer sector growth, especially in credit card and consumer finance areas.

Investment column, page 23

Director at Burton suits Tesco

Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

Tesco moved to strengthen its board yesterday when it appointed Andrew Higginson as finance director.

Mr Higginson, 40, finance director of Burton which recently announced de-merger plans, will not join Tesco until 15 November.

Tesco said the appointment would enable David Reid, deputy chairman, to give more focus to corporate strategy as well as the group's operations in Europe and Ireland. Mr Reid's responsibilities include finance and distribution.

Analysts welcomed the appointment, saying Mr Higginson had performed well at Burton and had a high-profile role as chairman of the economic affairs committee at the British Retail Consortium.



Andrew Higginson: Played a big role in Burton recovery

director of the multiples business which includes Burton Menswear, Top Shop, Top Man and Principles.

The company denied Mr Higginson's departure would disrupt the plans to de-merge Debenhams from the group.

John Hoerner, chief executive, said that while it was a disappointment to be losing Mr Higginson, he was not leaving until November, by which most of the work on the de-merger would be complete.

Mr Hall was recently made director of the de-merger process with responsibility for overall management of the commercial and statutory work. Mr Hoerner said: "Nigel Hall was actually someone I was going to lose in the de-merger because I didn't have a good enough job for him."

Former Tesco chairman Lord MacLaurin said in April that the

company was looking to add further directors to its board. Mr Higginson will join one of the country's most successful and aggressive retailers. Tesco has knocked Sainsbury's off its perch to become the UK's largest grocer. The group has expanded into banking as well as operations in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Ireland.

Mr Higginson has played an important part in Burton's recovery over the last few years during which it has re-built margins and transformed Debenhams into a powerful department store business.

However, the shares have had a tougher time recently and the company announced plans to de-merge Debenhams into a separate quoted company last month.

Tesco shares closed 3p higher at 430.5p while Burton shed 1.5p to 128.25p.

Eurotunnel Shuttle
demand nears peakChris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

Demand for Eurotunnel's car Shuttle service was almost back to its 1996 peak last month, as soaring numbers of British holiday-makers took advantage of the strong pound and the operations recovered from last year's disastrous fire.

Eurotunnel said 227,810 vehicles used the Le Shuttle Tourist service, just below the 234,393 a year ago. It means that so far this year more than a million vehicles have used the car Shuttle, with many also attracted by the continuing price war with the ferries.

Though car operations resumed last December, a month after the fire closed one of the two train tunnels, they did not return to full strength until the

spring. The damaged tunnel finally re-opened on 15 May, though Eurotunnel's figures yesterday showed its share of the total cross-Channel car market, at 37 per cent, was still well below last year's 50 per cent peak. "The whole market has expanded this year with the pound looking so strong at the moment," a Eurotunnel spokeswoman said.

The tunnel also carried 36,491 lorries in July, the first full month since freight services resumed in June, though lower than the 54,000 trucks last year.

The biggest increase was in Eurostar rail passengers, up 24 per cent between June and July to 651,849, against 529,330 in July 1996. In the first seven months of the year nearly 3.5 million passengers have used Eurostar services.

STOCK MARKETS									
FTSE 100		Dow Jones		Nikkei					
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low	Yield (%)			
FTSE 100	5086.80	+60.60	+1.2	5086.80	4056.60	3.24			
FTSE 250	4988.20	+80.90	+1.6	4729.40	4386.20	3.61			
FTSE 350	2432.30	+31.50	+1.3	2432.30	2017.90	3.31			
FTSE SmallCap	2197.15	+8.38	+0.4	2374.20	2178.29	3.26			
FTSE All-Share	2369.07	+29.33	+1.3	2369.07	1969.78	3.21			
New York	8271.39	+12.08	+0.1	8259.31	5032.94	1.58			
Tokyo	19475.85	-226.22	-1.1	20681.07	17303.85	0.801			
Hong Kong	15873.27	+131.67	+0.8	16673.27	12055.17	2.881			
Frankfurt	4414.35	+78.96	+1.8	4438.93	2848.77	1.261			

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES									
Short sterling		UK medium gilt		US long bond					
Rate	1 Month	Rate	1 Year	Rate	10 Year	Rate	10 Year	Rate	10 Year
UK	6.88	7.44	6.99	7.75	7.02	7.88			
US	5.58	5.94	6.21	6.49	6.48	6.74			
Japan	0.47	0.58	2.12	3.22	-	-			
Germany	3.06	3.50	5.69	6.27	6.40	-			

* One Year Euro money

* One Year Euro money

* One Year Euro money

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* One Year Euro money

CURRENCIES									
\$/\$		\$/DM		\$/Y					
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	Index	Close
\$/\$	1.5860	-1.51c	-1.5420	\$/DM	0.6305	+0.59	0.9485	\$/Y	167.5
\$/DM	1.5850	-1.83c	-1.5430	\$/Y	0.6309	+0.72	0.6483	Yr Chg	153.0
\$/Y	2.9711	-3.01p	2.2866	Yr Ago	1.8733	-0.12p	1.4829	12 Mo	12 Aug
DM/\$	1.8741	+2.49	1.56151	DM/\$	1.18500	+0.4	1.07750	21 Aug	21 Aug
Y/\$	102.8	-1.1	84.3	Y/\$	106.9	unch	96.1	Base Rate	6.75pc

* One Year Euro money

* One Year Euro money

* One Year Euro money

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* One Year Euro money

With effect from the close of business on Thursday 7th August 1997 and until further notice, TSB Base Rate is increased from 6.75% p.a. to 7.00% p.a.

All facilities (including regulated consumer credit agreements) with a rate of interest linked to TSB Base Rate will be varied accordingly.

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business

PIA row mars Royal & Sun results

Tom Stevenson
Financial Editor

Interim results from Royal & Sun Alliance yesterday marked the end of the first year of its merged operations but were overshadowed by a continuing row with the Personal Investment Authority over the insurance group's success in tackling pensions mis-selling cases.

The group, formed a year ago in a £6bn deal, insisted it had met a deadline set for it despite a statement from the PIA that it had failed to do so. Roger Taylor, deputy chairman, said Royal & Sun had resolved 90 per cent of so-called priority one cases, which involve people who have already retired or who have since died.

He also said that Royal & Sun had increased its provision against the mis-selling of the late 1980s and early 1990s, although he refused to give figures. The company has nearly 15,000 cases to resolve.

The PIA said it would be talking again to Royal & Sun but refused to comment further. The problem appears to focus on what should constitute a completed case and which cases should be included in determining whether the group has met its target.

The dispute clouded otherwise strong figures showing an 11 per cent rise in trading profits to £501m for the six months to June. The result was badly affected by the strength of sterling, without which profits would have shown an 18 per cent increase. The dividend was lifted 10 per cent to 21.7p per share.

Royal & Sun said it was on target to achieve promised savings worth £175m a year. The group has already shed 3,000 of 5,000 targeted jobs and savings

are running at an annualised rate of £95m. The savings, and a rise in the net asset value from 399p to 433p, cheered the market, which marked the shares 23p higher to close at 545.5p.

In general insurance, profits rose £22m to £374m, helped by better performance in the US and Canada. The underwriting result improved by £51m to a loss of £81m.

According to Mr Taylor, premiums remain under pressure in the UK, where the underwriting loss widened from £19m to £37m. Even after better investment returns there was a fall in total profits from £172m to £165m. Premium volumes fell in most classes of business as Royal rejected unprofitable business.

In line with the rest of the industry, personal motor business suffered from an increase in the average cost of claims. Household insurance was hit by a £19m increase in the cost of subsidence losses thanks to the dry weather at the start of the year.

Now one of the UK's top 10 life assurance suppliers, Royal & Sun Alliance restated its desire to be an important player in the sector but said it was cautious about acquisitions given the prices being commanded by companies.

Richard Gamble, chief executive, described European life companies as "extravagantly expensive" and said it was difficult to justify an acquisition as benefiting shareholders.

During the six months, worldwide life profits, which account for a fifth of the group total, rose 16 per cent to £108m.

Royal sun re-confirmed its commitment to buying back up to 5 per cent of its shares. So far it has bought in just 32 million shares, at a cost of £152m, about half the amount planned.



Prospects look up: Roger Taylor, deputy chairman of Royal & Sun Alliance (left), with Richard Gamble, chief executive. Photograph: Kalpesh Lathiga

'No end in sight' for Mersey Docks dispute

Andrew Yates

Mersey Docks, the UK's second largest ports group, warned yesterday that there was no end in sight to its dispute with 329 Liverpool dockers, which started almost two years ago and has become one of the longest running industrial actions in the world.

Talks between the group and its former employees are likely to remain deadlocked. Mersey Docks has offered to pay the dockers more than £9m, equivalent to £28,000 a man, on the condition they have a secret ballot to vote on the offer. But the dockers have refused to accept the pay-off and Mersey threatened yesterday to take the deal off the table.

Alastair Findlay, Mersey's finance director, said: "At the moment we don't see an end to the dispute and there is no sign the dockers will agree to a secret ballot. We will not increase our offer. At some stage we will have to withdraw our offer if it is not accepted." Mr Findlay claims the dispute, which cost the group £800,000 last year, has had "little effect" on its profits in the last six months.

The dockers were sacked in September 1995 after refusing to cross a picket line in sympathy for striking stevedores. Since then Mersey has taken on new workers and is unlikely to ever employ any of the 329 dissidents again at its container terminal. City accountants KPMG have drawn up plans which could lead to 40 workers getting new jobs at the port. However, the dockers are demanding that all their jobs are restored.

The news comes as Mersey announced a near 60 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £22m in the six months to June, thanks to the closure of its loss-making passenger ferry service, Eurolink, and record cargo volumes at its Liverpool and Mersey ports. Strong expansion of shipments across the Irish Sea due to the collapse of a competitor and a growth in the number of cars imported at its terminal in Sheerness have fuelled the increase volumes.

Slump in Rank's profits adds to pressures on Teare

Andrew Yates

City analysts said yesterday that Andrew Teare, the chief executive of Rank, was living on borrowed time after the troubled leisure group announced disappointing results.

Rank was the biggest blue-chip faller on a day that the FTSE 100 index raced away, slumping 30.5p to 340p. Since

Mr Teare took over as chief executive last year, Rank's shares have underperformed the FTSE 100 index by almost 50 per cent.

The poor figures overshadowed Rank's decision to spend more than £310m buying back up to 10 per cent of its own shares over the next few weeks.

Mr Teare said yesterday: "We have embarked on a very big

fundamental overhaul of Rank. Of course, I am disappointed we have not got more to show for it today. But it always takes longer than the market wants. There is a lot happening in the engine room and I am confident it will come through."

Rank plans to form a worldwide chain of Hard Rock Café hotels, with Singaporean hotel entrepreneur Ong Beng Seng,

based on the popular restaurant chain. Rank has already launched a Hard Rock TV channel and record label.

Mr Teare is also looking to open a new themed restaurant chain to go alongside the Hard Rock Café. Other plans include a chain of US casinos and the group has recently applied for a US gaming licence. Rank is due to announce a big shape

up of its Butlin's holiday camps next month. Analysts expect at least two of the five Butlin's sites will be completely rebuilt and renamed in an attempt to revitalise the flagging brand.

But observers remained sceptical about Mr Teare's reforms. "Whenever Rank produces an announcement these days, the share price falls. Mr Teare will have to start coming up with the

goods or he is likely to go," one analyst said yesterday.

Rank plans a rapid expansion of Tom Cobleigh, its themed pub chain. But a delay in opening saw Tom Cobleigh's first-half profits fall well short of expectations, adding fuel to criticisms that Rank paid over the odds for the business.

Rank's pre-tax profits fell to £85m (£144m) for the six

months to June due to a fall in video sales following a lack of big film releases.

The group is raising more than £100m by selling its property portfolio to British Land, the UK's second largest property group. The money will be used to part fund the share buy-back. The group would consider further share buy-backs next year.

IN BRIEF

Siemens to buy Ford out of joint venture

Siemens confirmed it was to buy out Ford Motor's 49 per cent share in their UK car components joint venture. Siemens Automotive Systems. Financial details of the deal are not being disclosed. Siemens Automotive Systems markets components for automotive engines, and was founded in 1994 when Siemens acquired 51 per cent of the Dunlop Automotive Composites operation from BTR. "Siemens recognises the strategic significance of integrated air fuel management systems in the future of the automotive industry, and is thoroughly committed to developing the business world-wide," said Juergen Gehrels, chief executive of Siemens. The facility was "well-positioned to serve the European market, and the acquisition will allow it to play a key role in our strategy of maximising the growing opportunities in this region."

Benefits claimant count rises in the US

Initial claims in the US for regular state unemployment benefits rose 25,000 to a seasonally adjusted 300,000 for the week ended 2 August, from a revised 275,000 the previous week, the Labor Department said. This is the highest level of weekly claims since the week ended 12 July. The consensus forecast among economists had expected jobless claims to rise by around 12,000. Jobless claims for the week ended 26 July were revised to a drop of 24,000 to 275,000 after being originally reported as a drop of 22,000 to 277,000. The four-week moving average for initial jobless claims fell 21,500 to 303,750. This is the lowest four-week moving average since the week ended 25 February 1989 when it was 302,500.

GEC Alsthom wins \$36m train order

GEC Alsthom and Bombardier Inc have jointly won a \$36m order from the Maryland Mass Transit Administration to supply six electric high-speed trains. Under the terms of the contract, equipment will also be supplied for 15 trains currently under production for Amtrak. The trains will be assembled by Bombardier, while GEC Alsthom will supply 60 per cent of the mechanical, electrical and electronic equipment. The trains will be delivered in July 2000.

Close Bros raises Crystal Account rates

Close Brothers yesterday raised the rate of interest on its Crystal Account, which is tied to base rates, from 6.25 per cent to 6.5 per cent on deposits over £5,000. The Crystal Account guarantees to pay a fixed 0.5 per cent less than base rate with immediate effect.

Du Pont puts \$1.7bn in new crops venture

DuPont and Pioneer Hi-Bred International in the US announced an agreement to form a research alliance and separate joint venture company to speed development of new crops. As part of this agreement, DuPont will invest \$1.7bn (£1.07bn) in Pioneer, ultimately owning 20 per cent of its stock for \$104 per share. Pioneer will use the proceeds to buy back its own stock.

Company Results

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Barclays (Q)	- (-)	1,270m (1,270m)	58.2p (55.3p)	13.5p
Capital & Counties (Q)	- (-)	80.1m (54.5m)	18p (18.2p)	- (-)
RSC Adv Technologies (Q)	15.9m (12.4m)	3.82m (2.71m)	5.08p (4.25p)	nil (-)
Liberty International (Q)	120m (98m)	61.8m (56.1m)	13.41p (13.15p)	8p (7.25p)
Lineage (Q)	20.3m (17.5m)	1.36m (1.01m)	6p (4.8p)	2.25p (nil)
Mersey Docks & Harbours (Q)	82.2m (72.8m)	22.2m (13.9m)	17.55p (10.7p)	4.5p (4p)
Shanghai SW (Q)	\$160m (\$120m)	\$32.9m (\$13.1m)	11c (2c)	8c (8c)
Bank Group (Q)	656m (640m)	85m (144m)	6.7p (12p)	5.25p (5p)
David Alexander (Q)	1.68m (1.7m)	419m (418m)	14.5p (14.55p)	4.4p (4.125p)
Robert Walters (Q)	36.8m (19.0m)	3.28m (1.67m)	8.8p (4.3p)	1.3p (1.6p)
Royal & Sun (Q)	- (-)	556m (503m)	23.5p (22p)	7.15p (6.5p)
Royal Dutch/Shell (Q2)	- (-)	11.18m (1.18m)	*4p (4.4p)	- (-)
Zimex (Q)	2.75m (2.54m)	688m (610m)	47.3p (43p)	13.5p (12.3p)

(Q) Final (Q) Interim (Q2) Second quarter * Current cost net income ** For Shell Transport & Trading

Robert Walters looks to Asia for expansion

Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

Robert Walters, the recruitment consultancy which came to the market last year, said yesterday it was looking for acquisitions in the Asia-Pacific region to boost its international business. The company opened a Hong Kong office this year and hopes to open one in Singapore by Christmas. Robert Walters, chief executive, said: "We are looking overseas but have nothing planned at the moment."

He was speaking as the company reported doubled pre-tax profits of £3.3m in the six months to 30 June. The shares, which were priced at 105p when the group came to the market last July, soared 39p to a new high of 295p.

Robert Walters, which specialises in permanent and contract jobs in the finance and information technology markets, said it was seeing buoyant growth in contract recruitment and IT jobs. It hopes to benefit from the surge in demand for computer-related expertise to

work on "millennium problem" consultancy projects. Ben Anderson, director, said the plan was to increase IT positions from 6 per cent of net fee income to around 50 per cent.

Mr Anderson said the company was drafting in professionals from Australia, New Zealand, India and other markets to fill a growing demand for skilled IT and compliance professionals in UK banks and other financial institutions.

Mr Walters said yesterday that trading in July remained strong. He denied that the cyclical nature of the recruitment market would make the business vulnerable to a downturn. "Only 20 per cent of our business is in commerce/permanent jobs which is the area that tends to be hit."

Yesterday the company announced plans to rebrand its business units. This will break the technology business, which was established a year ago, and the outsourcing division, which takes over the recruitment requirements of particular clients, into separate divisions.

Thomson takes a trip into the black

Magnus Grimond

Thomson Travel, the UK's leading travel operators and owners of the Lunn Poly travel agency chain, soared into the black in the first half of this year as British holidaymakers flocked overseas.

The business, part of the Canadian-controlled Thomson Corporation, also painted a rosy view of the outlook, saying demand for the high season months of July to September was strong.

Meanwhile, winter holiday sales were "substantially" above the level of this time last year and bookings for next summer were said to be encouraging, after brochures were issued three months early in May.

Thomson said the buoyancy

of consumer disposable income and a strong pound were leading to "generally favourable" trading conditions.

The comments came as the group revealed that losses of \$4m (£2.5m) had turned into a profit of \$17m in the normally quieter six months of the year to June. Sales leapt from \$992m to \$1.22bn. Net earnings of \$33m for the whole group last time turned into a loss of \$7m in the latest six months.

The sparkling figures will increase speculation that the travel business will soon be floated on the London stock market.

Separately, it was announced that Gordon Paul, who ran Thomson's UK regional newspaper group before it was sold in 1995, had resigned as head of its publishing arm.

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market report / shares

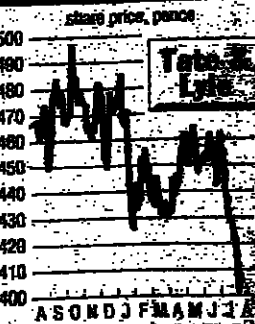
Takeover rumours sweeten Tate & Lyle share price

Taking Stock

Data Bank

FTSE 100	5086.8	+60.6
FTSE 250	4598.2	+80.9
FTSE 350	2432.3	+31.5
SEAO VOLUME	1279.9m shares	
60,684 bargains		
Glits Index	97.10	+0.26

Share spotlight



The sweet smell of takeover action wafted through the markets yesterday as rumours resurfaced of a bid for Tate & Lyle by Associated British Foods.

Dealers said there were renewed hopes that ABF would spend its £1.5bn cash pile on Tate, which plunged to a year low of 401p earlier this month. Although ABF controls a substantial proportion of the UK sugar market through its ownership of British Sugar, some analysts do not believe buying Tate would cause competition problems.

Investors in Tate have had a bumpy ride recently as the company has been battered by sterling's strength. The company's woes have been compounded by reorganisation costs in the United States, and ongoing problems in emerging markets such as Bulgaria.

Analysts said the two companies would complement

each other, but some expressed doubt about whether Tate was the kind of investment ABF was after. Tate closed up 8.5p at 414p, and ABF jumped 13p to 539.5p.

These days, when the sky seems to be the limit for Footsie, whisperings of takeovers are few and far between. The markets were once again engulfed in a sea of blue as Footsie closed at another record high of 5,086.8, up 60.6 points, having touched 5,095.3 in afternoon trading.

Trading was hectic, with almost 1.3 billion shares changing hands – the busiest day for around a month.

Sterling eased below the DM3 level after the Bank of England indicated that the quarter-point rise in base rate would be the last for a while, providing relief for exporters for the second day running.

Rollie-Royce motored along to 256p, up 13p, and TI Group



MARKET REPORT

CATHY NEWMAN

ended 19p better at 593.5p. GKN, also a beneficiary of a weaker sterling, added 31.5p to £11.88 after brokers responded positively to the company's better-than-expected profits the day before. Hoare Govett said the stock was undervalued, and BZW said buy.

The building sector put on a spurt after the Bank's hint that the base rate rise would be the last in the current economic cycle. In particular, Wolsey jumped 24p to 48p, relieved that the rejuvenation of the construction industry would not be choked off by further increases in interest rates in the near future. The weaker dol-

lar also helped as 40 per cent of the company's earnings are from the States.

But neither exporters nor builders quite managed to outsmart Barclays, which added a hefty 120p to close at £14.48. The bank, which scored on news that it had lifted its share buyback by £200m to £700m, boosted shares in other financial stocks.

Otherwise, the insurance stocks put in a fine performance after Royal & Sun Alliance reported interim results which exceeded City expectations. The group leapt 23p to 545.5p, and gave others in the sector a lift into the bargain. Guardian Royal Exchange out-

performed the other Footsie insurance companies, up 14.5p to 307.5p. Commercial Union, which reported the day before, ended 29p richer at 715p, and General Accident joined the rowdy rabble, finishing 17p up at 955.5p.

Not all the blue chips shared in the euphoria of Footsie's second record-breaking surge in a row. Rank was the worst-performing Footsie stock, plummeting 30.5p to 340p after the group announced interim results below forecasts. Reed International shed 40p to finish at 590p and Shell dropped 14.5p to 458.5p after both companies' interims also disappointed.

Several groups with media interests were in the doldrums after sceptics worried about a downturn in advertising revenues.

Granada Group eased 14.5p to 805p and Carlton Communications ended 9p poorer at

491p. Meanwhile, United News & Media closed down 6p at 681.5p over concerns it might buy into the cable industry.

NTL, the US cable group, has approached Telewest Communications about creating a rival to Cable & Wireless Communications. It is thought United is considering joining in.

News that United was to axe 100 jobs in its Miller Freeman trade magazine division did not seem to have a positive impact on the share price, despite the cost-savings to be gleaned from the cuts.

More Group, the poster advertising company, did not take part in the decline though, notching up a 9p rise to 611.5p. Analysts said the rebound, after the group hit a year low of 554p in June, was a reflection of contracts won in France and the imminent completion of a deal in Australia.

Investors banking on a share buy-back from Aegis Group, the media buyer, may be disappointed. The company is instead more likely to spend its earnings on acquisitions and expansion, particularly in the Far East. It has an office in Hong Kong, and is believed to be looking at setting up shop Malaysia, the Philippines and Taiwan. Shares traded at 58.5p.

There is strong talk that Harrison's & Crossfield is preparing disposals of one or two of its divisions. There has been a series of meetings with City advisers and Messrs. Pierson has issued a note, advising "buy for income and a break-up value". It favours a sell-off of the building and food businesses, and reckons that, if Harrison's splits itself up for sale, it could be worth £1.2bn, compared with its current worth of £874m.

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items. Other details: Ex rights x Ex-dividend x Ex at a United Securities Market & Suspended on Partly Paid on Nil Paid Shares & A.M. Stock.

The Independent Index

The index allows you to access real-time share prices by phone from London Stock Exchange. Simply dial 0930 525 737 and when prompted to do so, enter the 4-digit code assigned to each share. To access the latest financial reports dial 0891 1233 followed by one of the two-digit codes below.

FTSE 100 - Real-time	00	Starting Rates	04	Production Issues	36
UK Stock Market Report	01	Bullion Report	05	Water Shares	38
UK Company News	02	West St Report	06	Electricity Shares	40
Foreign Exchange	03	Tokyo Market	07	High Street Banks	41

Anyone with a landline telephone can use the service. For a detailed description of the Independent Index, including a list of all the codes, call 0930 525 737. Facility available 0800-2000hrs. Calls cost 50p per minute. Call charges include VAT.

Market leaders: Top 20 volumes

Stock	Vol/1000	Stock	Vol/1000	Stock	Vol/1000
BT	220000	Caracas	20000	UK & Am News	10000
Shell	200000	London 750	10000	UK & Am News	10000
BT	200000	London 750	10000	UK & Am News	10000
BT	200000	London 750	10000	UK & Am News	10000
BT	200000	London 750	10000	UK & Am News	10000

FTSE 100 Index hour by hour

Open 5086.8 up 62.6	11.00 5077.0 down 9.2	14.00 5088.8 up 62.6
09.00 5043.0 up 18.8	12.00 5067.2 up 0.5	15.00 5084.3 up 58.1
10.00 5038.4 up 13.2	13.00 5062.7 up 35.5	16.00 5091.8 up 65.6
		Close 5086.8 up 60.6

Stock	Price	Change	Vol	Stock	Price	Change	Vol
BT	414.0	+8.5	120000	UK & Am News	681.5	-6.0	10000
Shell	458.5	-14.5	200000	UK & Am News	681.5	-6.0	10000
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682	418	FT Group	585	12	227	685	583	Stuart Weitz	775	xx+75	59
683	32	Genesys	37	86	423	308	583	Thomson	784	xx+75	55
684	87	Greenleaf	34	15	226	686	605	Urb Lifelines	793	xx+15	65
685	85	Hapt Group	602	xx+5	637	701	344	Vanguard	710	xx+11	48
686	194	Higha Robin	217	xx	638	485	325	Yachyshi	438	xx	83
687	140	Inserra	198	34	89	355	320	York Waterworks	340	47	9
688	580	ISPA Holdings	640	xx	447	320	286	York Waterworks A	310	47	56
689	75	JS&J Bank	75	3	70	320					

Zeneca keeps pace with rivals

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY MAGNUS GRIMOND

Yesterday's initial 49p drop in Zeneca's share price was a curious reaction by the market to the drug group's interim figures. Announcing a 22 per cent rise in underlying profits for the six months to June, it was hard not to agree with the group's chief executive, Sir David Barnes, that the results bore comparison with the best of his rivals.

Equivalent half-year results announced by Glaxo Wellcome showed the giant of the sector managing a mere 6 per cent increase in underlying trading profits, and even SmithKline Beecham's more respectable 16 per cent was still well behind.

The problem, of course, is that drug groups have been in the forefront of the stock market's giddy rise this year. Zeneca's share price, which ended 6p ahead at £20.52 yesterday, has itself risen by around a quarter since the beginning of January.

Based on NatWest Markets' unchanged profit forecast of £1.05bn for the full year, the shares stand on a forward multiple of 27. That is below its UK peers and well below US drug groups, but still leaves little room for mistakes.

Certainly Zeneca was making all the right noises yesterday. Given that the first-half profits had to bear a £90m hit from the strong pound, the 10 per cent increase in the pre-tax total to £669m was more than respectable. Group margins rose a chunky 2.8 percentage points to 24 per cent.

Zeneca gave warning that the continuing impact of sterling, plus higher new product launch costs and the traditional seasonal downturn in agrochemicals, would hit second-half returns. Even so, John Mayo, the group's departing finance director, gave a strong hint that margins would still be ahead in the full-year figures.

Apart from Kadian, a morphine product which is under review, most of Zeneca's recent introductions seem to be selling well. Drugs launched in the past two years, such as cancer drugs Zoladex and Casodex, now represent 16 per cent of sales and the second half will see more, including the further rollout of the Zomig migraine drug and Seroquel for schizophrenia.

All being well, this investment in new product launches will pay off in higher sales next year.

But the longer-term question is how Zeneca copes with a string of patent expiries early next century, notably its best-selling Zestril heart drug, which saw sales slip 5 per cent to £305m in the first half. Zeneca is clearly confident that with more than 45 products

in its development pipeline, it can sail through that squall. Analysts will feel more confident after its next research presentation to the City in early December. Even so, investors should hold on.

Barclays keeps a grip on costs

Martin Taylor, Barclays' chief executive, said yesterday's half-year figures from the bank got better the more you looked at them. Certainly the market seemed to find more to cheer about than was immediately apparent from an underlying 8 per cent rise in profits to £1.27bn, raising the share price by 12p to an all-time high of £14.475.

What appeared to please the analysts was better cost control than they had expected and lower provisions against bad debts.

BZW, the investment banking operation that was such an embarrassment only six months ago, appears to be on the mend and investors are to get £700m in share buy-backs this year.

rather than the £500m investors had been promised last February.

The methodology Mr Taylor used to calculate how much of Barclays' capital is surplus to requirements is well beyond ordinary mortals.

But it needs no rocket science to understand a total of £1.75bn of value handed back to shareholders in the past two years. It is little wonder the shares have more than doubled since the start of last year.

Banking in the UK led the charge, with profits showing a healthy 30 per cent improvement. Personal banking and the corporate side, the powerhouse of the group, did well, despite a squeeze in margins in all areas except mortgages.

BZW's profits of £124m were three times higher than the disastrous second half of 1996 and the investment bank's return on capital rose from 8 per cent to a more respectable 12 per cent. That is still barely above BZW's cost of capital, but it is at least moving in the right direction.

The question is whether the stock market is putting too much faith in the current return on equity of 24 per cent being sustainable.

After yesterday's sharp increase,

the shares traded on around 12 times Salomon Brothers' expected earnings per share of 128p for next year, assuming profits of £2.7bn.

That puts it in the middle of the pack, above NatWest and the Scottish banks, but below Lloyds TSB, HSBC and Halifax.

The leaders have better growth prospects and Barclays' rating is now about right.

Reed boosts online services

The strength of sterling was the main story at the half-way stage for Reed Elsevier, the Anglo-Dutch publishing group. Currency effects wiped out almost all the underlying 10 per cent profit increase it achieved in the six months to June, leaving headline profit just 1 per cent higher at £419m. Shareholders in Reed International, the British end of this double-headed group, see their interim dividend rise 7 per cent to 4.4p, while Dutch shareholders in Elsevier bag a 45 per cent increase to 0.29 guilders.

The performance of the main business divisions, namely scientific, professional, business and consumer publishing, was equally muted. The real excitement lay elsewhere, notably in the future development of new features, including the online information service, ScienceDirect, due for commercial release later this year, and the increased investment in electronic publications at Reed Travel group. An active acquisition policy should also add spice.

This year the group has committed itself to more than 20 acquisitions, costing in total over £600m, including the Chilton Business group which will be completed shortly. It has at least as much again available in cash or borrowing powers. A deal to acquire Reuters' specialist medical magazines is in the wind, while the sale of the children's book division to Pearson or to management could be announced by the end of the month.

Market conditions in the second half are unlikely to improve much, however. Some 70 per cent of profits come from overseas and sterling still looks uncomfortably strong. Several analysts scaled down forecasts for the full-year yesterday. The consensus is now around £550m, for a 5 per cent rise on 1996. The shares fell 40p to 590p, which values them on a forward multiple of 20, falling to 18. High, but still worth holding for the long term.

Super-SIB's search for sq ft has agents drooling

PEOPLE & BUSINESS



Howard Davies: West is west and east is nowhere

Whether super-SIB? Or rather, which of the handful of suitable sites in London will house Labour's new investment regulator?

The subject is a hot topic in regulatory circles, not least because the 2,000-odd staff may end up in Canary Wharf in London's Docklands, still not the easiest place to get to and from.

Word is that staff from the nine existing bodies which will go to make up the new regulator are fighting a rearguard action to avoid banishment downriver. Optimists argue that since super-SIB's chairman, Howard Davies, lives in west London, he is unlikely to want to commute that far east.

Finding a site for super-SIB is also making property agents drool, being by far the biggest property deal in the capital for some time.

Super-SIB will need around 300,000 sq ft of space by next year, which narrows the number of acceptable sites. There are three buildings nearing completion in central London at the 200,000 sq ft mark - for instance, a building by Argyll and Helical Bar on London Wall. Overhill could be housed in the NatWest Tower near by, which itself is just being refurbished.

Another theory goes thus: The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) is still embarrassed by the spend-thrift image gained under its former boss Jacques Attali, who spent more on the head office marble loo and gold taps than he did on lending to needy countries.

This theory suggests that the EBRD is seeking someone else to take up the lease on its 367,000 sq ft Bishopsgate office so that it can move to cheaper digs in Canary Wharf. And who better to move into Bishopsgate than super-SIB?

Another contender is a giant site in Spitalfields, earmarked as the new home of Life, the futures market that continues to grow at a prodigious rate.

However, if Life does a U-Turn and abandons its "open outcry" trading for screen-based trading, it won't need such a big new building. Again, super-SIB could leap in and take the building instead.

The regulators will be up against stiff competition for space in the City. West-Deutsche Landesbank is about to make a decision on taking 400,000 sq ft, while Goldman Sachs is also poised to expand. Whatever happens, the property agents will be queuing campers for some time to come.

Still on the subject of Super-SIB, I hear that its head of human resources is going to be Sandra Jenner. She will come with a warm endorsement from her present colleagues at the Personal Investment Authority (PIA) where she holds a similar position.

Her most interesting decision at the PIA has been the attempt to exclude members of staff from the board of trustees of the PIA pension scheme despite the provisions of the 1995 Pensions Act.

The people at BZW may be back on track following this year's better results, but the 3,500 staff recently relocated to Canary Wharf have had a

salutary introduction to the messy public transport facilities in Docklands.

Most people in Canary Wharf rely on the Docklands Light Railway (DLR). This week it instituted a bizarre one-way pedestrian scheme lasting four months while one of its escalators at Bank Underground station is repaired. So if you want to transfer from the DLR to the Tube you have to walk underground to Embankment station, emerge at street level and then walk all the way back to Bank station.

This has prompted scenes of mass revolt by passengers, who don't see why they can't use other staircases in Bank station. Investment bankers from BZW, Credit Suisse First Boston and Morgan Stanley are all affected. What's the banking equivalent of a Peasants' Revolt?

Recent management upheavals at the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden have been described as "more dramatic than anything Verdi came up with". At the centre is Mary Allen, due to take up the post of chief executive next month after the shock resignation of Genista McIntosh.

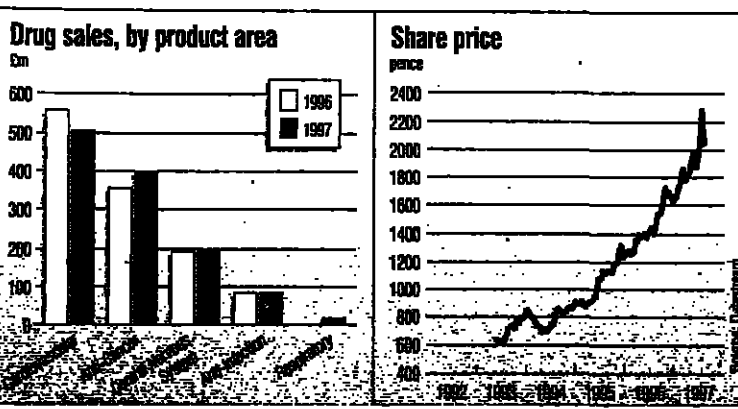
The ROH has just closed for a two-year refurbishment that will cost £213m. MPs have criticised the way Ms Allen was recruited from her previous job as secretary-general of the Arts Council.

Anyway, I had not realised she was married to Nigel Pantling, one of three senior executives at Hambros Bank who resigned last month over the bank's involvement with Andrew Regan's attempt to buy the Co-op. Mr Pantling is now on "garden leave". Some in the opera world suspect his wife may join him if the current wave of criticism does not subside.

John Willcock

Zeneca: At a glance

Trading record	1994	1995	1996	1996	1997
		Full year		Half year	
Turnover (£m)	4,46	4,90	5,26	2,94	2,75
Pre-tax profits (£m)	659	619	975	610	669
Earnings per share (p)	46.8	35.6	67.8	42.8	47.3
Dividends per share (p)	28.5	31.0	35.0	12.5	13.5



Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	D-Mark	Spot	1 month	3 months
US	1.5860	20.49	59.56	1000	0.5338		
Canada	2.2303	77.26	209.20	1358	32.31	88.38	
Germany	2.9711	97.80	289.27	1873	39.38	117.18	
France	10.2845	342.50	820.69	6323	139.98	339.98	
Italy	2.0041	62.14	19.07	9211	174.79	465.480	
Japan	16.94	104.10	307.32	1850	32.61	82.61	
Spain	1.6501	52.01	16.01	9211	174.79	465.480	
Belgium	61.578	21.15	59.31	36.700	73.83	185.0	
Denmark	11.37	340.250	1070.80	7383	178.15	365.355	
Netherlands	3.3677	108.00	35.34	2138	43.42	109.27	
Ireland	10.77	8.2	12.16	1459	6.7	9.16	
Sweden	12.21	360.250	990.800	7891	147.42	439.48	
Switzerland	2.9678	97.80	289.27	1873	39.38	117.18	
South Africa	2.2768	70.240	192.800	15202	54.53	151.59	
South Korea	2.4298	74.105	342.320	12502	54.53	151.59	
Australia	2.5501	39.34	75.16	1538	34.5	87.22	
Hong Kong	2.2278	10.2	10.48	736	5.4	13.15	
Malaysia	4.918	34.51	102.43	23430	40.50	125.143	
New Zealand	2.4298	74.105	342.320	12502	54.53	151.59	
Saudi Arabia	5.9483	37.33	129.10	37505	19.1	51.19	
Singapore	2.2370	49.44	153.14	14735	19.1	51.19	

Other Spot Rates

Country	Spot	Dollar	Country	Spot	Dollar
Argentina	15.882	0.0988	Nigeria	132.34	83.4000
Australia	20.9029	13.815	Oman	0.6710	0.3291
Brazil	1.724	1.0050	Philippines	64.202	26.5000
Canada	2.2303	8.2501	Portugal	300.795	98.850
China	5.904	3.2503	Russia	3.440	6.728
Czech	8.6963	0.5075	Saudi Arabia	5.9483	37.33
Denmark	34.844	28.000	South Africa	74.239	45.6292
France	46.4789	292.940	South Korea	46.4789	292.940
Germany	56.524	35.710	Spain	56.524	35.710
India	0.4454	0.0000	UAE	5.6272	35.730

Forward rates quoted high to low and at a discount; rates quoted low to high and at a premium.
 *Dollar rates quoted as reciprocals.
 For the latest foreign exchange rates call 0991 123 3033.
 Calls cost 50p per minute.

Interest Rates

UK	6.75%	Germany	2.50%	US	5.50%	Japan	0.50%
Base		Discount	4.00%	Prime	5.00%	Discount	2.50%
Intervention	3.00%	Canada	4.75%	Discount	3.00%	Central	3.00%
1 Day Repo	5.25%	Denmark	3.25%	Sweden	Discount	100%	
Advances	2.90%	France	4.75%	Repos (Avg)	4.00%	London	100%

Bond Yields

Country	5yr	10yr	yield %	Country	5yr	10yr	yield %
UK	7.0%	6.92	7.25%	US	6.25%	5.81	5.81
US	6.0%	6.00	6.25%	Japan	7.00%	5.80	5.80
Japan	8.50%	1.30	2.87%	France	6.25%	6.31	6.31
France	6.0%	6.00	6.75%	Spain	6.0%	4.85	6.25%
Australia	6.0%	4.50	6.0%	Italy	13.0%	5.81	6.50%
Germany	6.0%	4.50	6.0%	ECU	6.0%	5.16	5.50%
Canada	4.75%	5.50%	5.62				

Money Market Rates

Overnight	7 Day	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year
Interbank	6 7/8	6 7/8	6 7/8	6 7/8	6 7/8
Banking CDs	6 7/8	6 7/8	6 7/8	6 7/8	6 7/8
Local Authority Depos	6 7/8	6 7/8	6 7/8	6 7/8	6 7/8
Discount Market Rates	6 7/8	6 7/8	6 7/8	6 7/8	6 7/8
Treasury Bills (Day)	6 7/8	6 7/8	6 7/8	6 7/8	6 7/8
ECU Linked Dep	6 7/8	6 7/8	6 7/8	6 7/8	6 7/8

Tourist Rates

F Buys	2,1370	F Buys	2,1370	F Buys	2,1370
Australia(Dollars)	2,1370	France(Francs)	9,9880	New Zealand(Dollars)	2,4420
Austria(Schillings)	20,8500	Germany(Mark)	2,9810	Norway(Krone)	12,2000
Belgium(Francs)	61,2000	Greece(Drachmas)	483,8000	Portugal(Escudos)	258,3000
Canada(Dollars)	2,1765	Hong Kong(Dollars)	94,7000	Spain(Pesetas)	166,7000
Cyprus(Pounds)	0,9350	Ireland(Pounds)	1,1010	Sweden(Kronor)	12,7700
Czech(Coronas)	11,3550	Italy(Lira)	2918,0000	Switzerland(Francs)	2,1410
Denmark(Kroner)	3,3220	Japan(Yen)	188,0000	Turkey(Lira)	257,0000
Finland(Markka)	3,3220	Malaysia(Ringgit)	1,3520	United States(Dollars)	1,3520

Life Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open	Close
Long Gilt	100.00	115.10	114.17	114.17
Short Gilt	100.00	100.17	101.84	101.84
Long Euro	100.00	100.17	101.84	101.84
Short Euro	100.00	100.17	101.84	101.84
3 Mth Sterling	100.00	100.17	101.84	101.84
3 Mth Euro	100.00	100.17	101.84	101.84
3 Mth US Dollar	100.00	100.17	101.84	101.84
3 Mth Japanese Yen	100.00	100.17	101.84	101.84
3 Mth Canadian Dollar	100.00	100.17	101.84	101.84
3 Mth Australian Dollar	100.00	100.17	101.84	101.84
3 Mth New Zealand Dollar	100.00	100.17	101.84	101.84
3 Mth South African Rand	100.00	100.17	101.84	101.84
3 Mth Hong Kong Dollar	100.00	100.17	101.84	101.84
3 Mth Singapore Dollar	100.00	100.17	101.84	101.84
3 Mth Thai Baht	100.00	100.17	101.84	101.84
3 Mth Indonesian Rupiah	100.00	100.17	101.84	101.84
3 Mth Malaysian Ringgit	100.00	100.17	101.84	101.84
3 Mth Philippine Peso	100.00	100.17	101.84	101.84
3 Mth Vietnamese Dong	100.00	100.17	101.84	101.84
3 Mth South Korean Won	100.00	100.17	101.84	101.84
3 Mth Chinese Yuan	100.00	100.17	101.84	101.84
3 Mth Indian Rupee	100.00	100.17	101.84	101.84
3 Mth Pakistani Rupee	100.00	100.17	101.84	101.84
3 Mth Bangladeshi Taka	100.00	100.17	101.84	101.84
3 Mth Nepalese Rupee	100.00	100.17	101.84	101.84
3 Mth Sri Lankan Rupee	100.00	100.17	101.84	101.84
3 Mth Maldivian Rufiyaa	100.00	100.17	101.84	101.84
3 Mth Bhutanese Ngultrum	100.00	100.17	101.84	101.84
3 Mth Mongolian Tugrik	100.00	100.17	101.84	101.84
3 Mth Kazakhstani Tenge	100.00	100.17	101.84	101.84
3 Mth Kyrgyzstani Som	100.00	100.17	101.84	101.84
3 Mth Tajikistani Somoni	100.00	100.17	101.84	101.84
3 Mth Uzbekistani Sum	100.00	100.17	101.84	101.84
3 Mth Turkmenistani Manat	100.00	100.17	101.84	101.84
3 Mth Azerbaijani Manat	100.00	100.17	101.84	101.84</

sport

Revolution put on hold for the day

If there is a revolution on the march in English cricket it was lost on a sun-baked but largely subdued audience at Trent Bridge, for whom the present disparity between the English and Australian teams was emphasised all too quickly.

From the moment it became known that Mark Taylor had won the toss, that Michael Atherton's new and supposedly "lucky" coin had smiled no more kindly on him than the four-time loser

Jon Culley finds little for the faithful at Trent Bridge to shout about

er he had discarded in its favour, there was a sense of inevitability that almost instantly conveyed itself to the crowd.

The heady atmosphere of Edgbaston in the first week of June seemed a good deal more than nine weeks ago. Atherton's exhortation to the public to bottle up the Birmingham spirit and

carry it with them through the series long forgotten words. There was a roar of sorts as the recalled Devon Malcolm ran in to bowl the first delivery of the match, but peaceful sunbathing soon appeared to have greater appeal than getting behind our beleaguered boys. Even the entry into Test cricket of the Hollis brothers, whose presence, we had been told, would "fire the nation's imagination", stirred only negligible excitement.

Ben, whom Atherton had hoped would lend his youthful lack of inhibition to England's cause, began with three overs of little distinction and was promptly rewrapped in cotton wool. This worked inasmuch as he returned later to dismiss Greg Blewett with a long hop, but did little to deflate the swelling confidence of the opposition.

The Australian camp now gleefully perceives English cricket as a game "in disarray", the prospect of a fifth successive Ashes series loss seen as the largest single factor behind the far-reaching reforms outlined by Lord MacLaurin this week. To their eyes, moreover, the selection of the Hollis brothers carries with it the smacks of desperation.

It was not quite a repeat of 1989, when Mark Taylor batted all day with Geoff Marsh and Australia finished 301 without loss, but there were too many similarities for comfort for Atherton, who made his Test debut in that match and may yet remember this one as the beginning of the end of his captaincy.

The Hollis brothers apart, the batsman in this match is the groundsman, Steve Birtles, formerly with Derbyshire, whose work so far has been well received, leading to closer contests on a square which had become notoriously lifeless.

"Ideally, that is what I would want from the Test pitch," Birtles said before the start. Unfortunately, from England's position, the ideal has not been achieved.



Australia's Greg Blewett square cuts Robert Croft at Trent Bridge yesterday

Photograph: David Ashdown

Ramprakash in sparkling form again

Round-up

Mark Ramprakash, overlooked for the fifth Ashes Test, made 190, leading his Middlesex side from the front yesterday in their Championship match with Hampshire at Lord's. He shared in a fourth-wicket partnership of 185 in 51 overs with Owais Shah, as Middlesex amassed 442 for 8 before Ramprakash declared. Hampshire were 69 for 2 at stumps.

Ramprakash, 99 not out overnight, needed only two deliveries to complete his century. It came off 199 balls, included 18 fours and was his fifth of the season, his fourth in the Championship and second in successive innings.

Tom Moody, Worcestershire's captain, must have feared he would come to regret his decision to bat on after lunch against Northamptonshire, but an excellent catch above his head by Gavin Haynes to dismiss Alan Fordham eight overs from the close and the quick demise of the nightwatchman Scott Boswell provided an unexpected late twist in his side's favour at Northampton.

The home side ended on 208 for 3, still 194 runs shy of avoiding the follow-on. Having conceded a 500-plus score for the second home game in succession, Northamptonshire appeared in no imminent danger when Russell Warren and Fordham were making comfortable progress after David Roberts was dismissed for 40. Then Fordham and Boswell fell.

Earlier Phil Weston, who began the day on 196 not out, laboured for 40 further deliveries to reach his first double century. He was out mis-timing a pull off Kevin Curran.

Top drawer from Sidebottom

MIKE CAREY

reports from Edgbaston
Zimbabwe Under-19 208
England Under-19 155-1

Ryan Sidebottom carved himself a little niche in cricket history yesterday by taking 7 for 30 on the opening day of the first Under-19 Test against Zimbabwe here. They were the best figures since the contests began in 1974, surpassing Peter Such's 7 for 72 in 1983.

Moreover, it was all achieved on a pretty good pitch as England's opening pair, Stephen Peters and Robert Key, later illustrated by cruising to 94 in only 18 overs, though not without a certain amount of misfortune and miscalculation by the tourists.

Overall, however, it was Sidebottom's quality that stood out. For a left-arm seam bowler, he

has pace. Yorkshire's coach, Steve Oldham, believes there is considerably more to come. He not only swung the new ball but extracted bounce and never looked back after Neil Ferreira had offered no stroke to one that flattened his off stump.

Nor was he without aggression. Spotting Lahore Malhotra's tendency to move early on to the front foot, he dug one in to have him caught off a glove to gully. Later, when the ball had lost its hardness, his ability to bowl apparently effortless yorkers and his subtle changes of pace also served him well.

By then Zimbabwe had rebuilt their innings only to cave in when Sidebottom operated for the first time with the breeze behind him from the City end.

In quick succession he bowled Andre Hoffman and the captain Bertus Erasmus, who was beaten for pace and palpably late on a ball of full length. Once Mark

Vermulen, who had held things together with a compact half-century, had gone to what must have been a hair-line lbw decision. England at last had two ends to bowl at. Alex Tudor's remarkable one-handed catch removed Colin Delport and Muleki Nkala was leg before padding up to Dean Cosker's arm ball.

The ease with which Ian Englebrecht and Aubrey Steyn added 47 for the last wicket must have hinted to Zimbabwe's opening bowlers that they were in for and Peters and Key did much as they pleased until Key fell to a full toss. Peters later moved past his half-century from 73 balls, hitting nine fours. But England's success would have been tempered by a mixed day for Tudor, who not only bowled an unacceptable amount of no-balls but was also warned for running on the pitch.

Aussies given escape route

HENRY BLOFELD

One of the main differences between England and Australia was perfectly illustrated late in the afternoon at Trent Bridge. Andy Caddick produced a beauty to Mark Taylor which swung in late and knocked his off stump out of the ground.

Australia were then 160 for 2 and there were still 25 minutes to go before tea. There were two new batsmen, Greg Blewett and Mark Waugh, at the crease and the ball which had been changed five overs before when the old one went out of shape, began to swing and bounce.

For five or six overs before the interval, Devon Malcolm and Caddick, who were bowling in tandem, should have been at Blewett and Waugh's throats. For the first time in the day the Australians were under a little bit of pressure.

Caddick beat Waugh outside the off stump with his first two balls before being driven beautifully through the covers off the third. Then it was Malcolm's turn after a leg bye had taken Waugh down to his end. Waugh only had to play one ball in the next over: one hit him high on the thigh and the other

four went through harmlessly past the off stump.

Now, Caddick bowled to Blewett. The first ball was pushed back defensively, the second flew wide down the leg side, the third went even wider down the off side, the fourth was short and wide of the off stump and Blewett ran it down to third man for four.

The last two went harmlessly wide of the off stump and Blewett did not have to play at either of them.

The obvious truth is that you are not going to get a batsman out if he does not have to play at the ball and this sad pattern continued until tea. Another wicket then would have changed the whole situation.

Contrast this with the bowling of Glenn McGrath or Jason Gillespie when they have got England in a corner. The batsman is given no respite whatever. He seldom gets the chance to play no stroke and hardly ever is given a ball he can hit for four. There is a far greater and more impressive discipline about the Australians in all departments of the game. This is one of the main reasons why England are 2-1 down in the series and Australia are almost certain to retain the Ashes.

Rose flowers after rain

DAVID LLEWELLYN

reports from Taunton
Gloucestershire 119-4 v Somerset

The clouds over the County Ground have not been confined to the skies. Gloucestershire, eager to regain the leadership of the County Championship, had had to watch precious time trickling down the windows when rain washed out the first day.

The weather relented yesterday, but when they were shown the pitch that Somerset decided to use Gloucestershire were understandably unhappy. It was the same one that had been used for the tour match against the Australians at the weekend. Although only 166 overs had been possible, there were areas of rough which were conveniently placed to suit a left spinner and worry any batsman.

Since Somerset have one of the best leggies in the world in Mushtaq Ahmed, Gloucestershire's reluctance to tackle him

on a patchwork of a pitch was understandable.

They also pointed out that it was not the original choice for the match, and the regulations prohibit a pitch being used for successive four-day matches.

Gloucestershire's refusal, entirely within the rules, to agree to Somerset's choice came at a price though. Instead of starting at the scheduled 11am, they had to kick their heels for a further five hours while the original pitch, which had been exposed to the torrential downpour of the last week, was mopped, mown and rolled to a dampish finish.

Appropriately, given the soggy conditions, everything went swimmingly for Gloucestershire while Tony Wright and Matt Windows compiled 61 runs, the county's highest opening partnership of the season and only the second time the first wicket had realised 50 or more runs this year.

Then disaster. Graham Rose tempted Wright, he nibbled and went, caught behind for 30. Windows kept out the Somerset

attack for a while but when he lost Tim Hancock, another victim for Rose, it triggered an alarming collapse.

Gloucestershire then lost Monte Lynch and Windows in three balls. Lynch's was an unlucky dismissal, he appeared to chop a yorker length ball from Rose on to his foot, whence it rebounded on to his stumps.

The fears about Mushtaq were confirmed when he did Windows with his googly. Fortunately for Gloucestershire the captain, Mark Alleyne, and the Australian Shaun Young survived to the close.

Derbyshire have quashed a £1,500 fine imposed on the former captain Kim Barnett for comments he made following the departure of Dean Jones.

CRICKET SCOREBOARD

Britannic Assurance County Championship

Second day of four: 11.0 today

Kent v Essex

OVERS: 203 for 41

A P Wells c G G Law b Iran 109

M V Fleming c Iran b D R Law 138

IS A Marsh c Robinson b Grayson 47

PA Strang c Rollins b D R Law 85

Extras (b4, lb1, w5, nb4) 16

Total (for 2 dec, 342.2 overs) 525

Fall (for 2 dec, 342.2 overs) 525

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Gloucestershire v Somerset

OVERS: 203 for 41

A P Wells c G G Law b Iran 109

M V Fleming c Iran b D R Law 138

IS A Marsh c Robinson b Grayson 47

PA Strang c Rollins b D R Law 85

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Somerset v Gloucestershire

OVERS: 203 for 41

A P Wells c G G Law b Iran 109

M V Fleming c Iran b D R Law 138

IS A Marsh c Robinson b Grayson 47

PA Strang c Rollins b D R Law 85

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sport



COUNTDOWN TO THE 1997-98 FOOTBALL SEASON



BEYOND THE PREMIERSHIP: Pierre van Hooijdonk is aiming to help his new club back into the top flight and the Dutch team into the World Cup final. Phil Shaw spoke to him and, below, sets the scene for the three divisions of the Nationwide League

Van the man to fan Forest's promotion fires

Fifty thousand Celtic supporters once proclaimed Pierre van Hooijdonk's uniqueness in song. Now it is confirmed, Nottingham Forest's towering Dutchman is the only player preparing to start the season against Port Vale at Burslem with realistic hopes of finishing it against Brazil in Paris.

From one of the First Division's less salubrious settings, the World Cup final, some might call it a journey from the ridiculous to the divine. Van Hooijdonk, stalked by tabloid problems over the past year, chooses his words more carefully.

With a handful of arguable exceptions — Ravanelli, Kladze, Merson and Sinclair — the 27-year-old striker is the biggest star in the Football League firmament.

Yet he is anxious not to be seen as arrogant, one of the more polite tags he attracted during the dispute with Celtic that led to his £3.5m defection to Forest in March. He had allegedly said that the £7,000 a week the Glasgow club were offering was "all very well for the homeless but not for an international footballer".

Van Hooijdonk claims he was "set up" by a reporter and never mentioned the homeless. Some mud invariably sticks, however, which may explain why, after stressing that he intends to spend no more than one season outside the Premiership, he says that this is a declaration of ambition on Forest's behalf rather than a prima donna's ultimatum.

As with many players for whom English is not the first language, the nuances of his conversation are open to misinterpretation, wilful or otherwise. It does not take a cynic to see, for instance, how his self-effacing assessment of his role as perpetual substitute for the Netherlands could be portrayed as gross vanity.

"I can't believe I'm not in the starting line-up," he says, sulled. "It's not as if our strikers are the best." Then comes the

and the punchline: "We only have Kluivert and Bergkamp." When I mention that tomorrow's opponents, Port Vale, have several of his compatriots in their squad, he wonders whether they will consider him conceited if he does not recognise and address them in Dutch. But if modesty and sensitivity are not attributes one automatically associates with Van Hooijdonk, he leaves them behind when he goes to work.

On the pitch, he projects a self-confidence which is hard to

"I can't believe I'm not in the Dutch starting line-up. We only have Kluivert and Bergkamp"



distinguish from arrogance. Indeed, when he first arrived from NAC Breda two and a half years ago, his bravado was exactly what Celtic needed after so long in the shadow of Rangers.

He scored on his debut and in his first Old Firm game. After heading the goal in the 1995 Scottish Cup final that ended Celtic's six years without a trophy, he hit another 32 in his only full campaign. "There's only one Pierre," the green hordes swooned.

"I had a fantastic relationship with the fans and received lots of kind letters after I left," Van Hooijdonk recalls. "But very

early on there were contract problems. At first it didn't worry me because I was playing regularly and doing the business."

The souring of the affair, centring on his insistence that Celtic had reneged on an agreement to pay him more if he topped 20 goals, led eventually to his being dropped. "I didn't play for several weeks and I asked the manager [Tommy Burns] if there would be changes in the near future. The answer was no."

There were two World Cup matches coming up, against San Marino and Turkey. In my position in the Dutch squad, which is usually a substitute to try and force things late in a game, I couldn't afford to miss them.

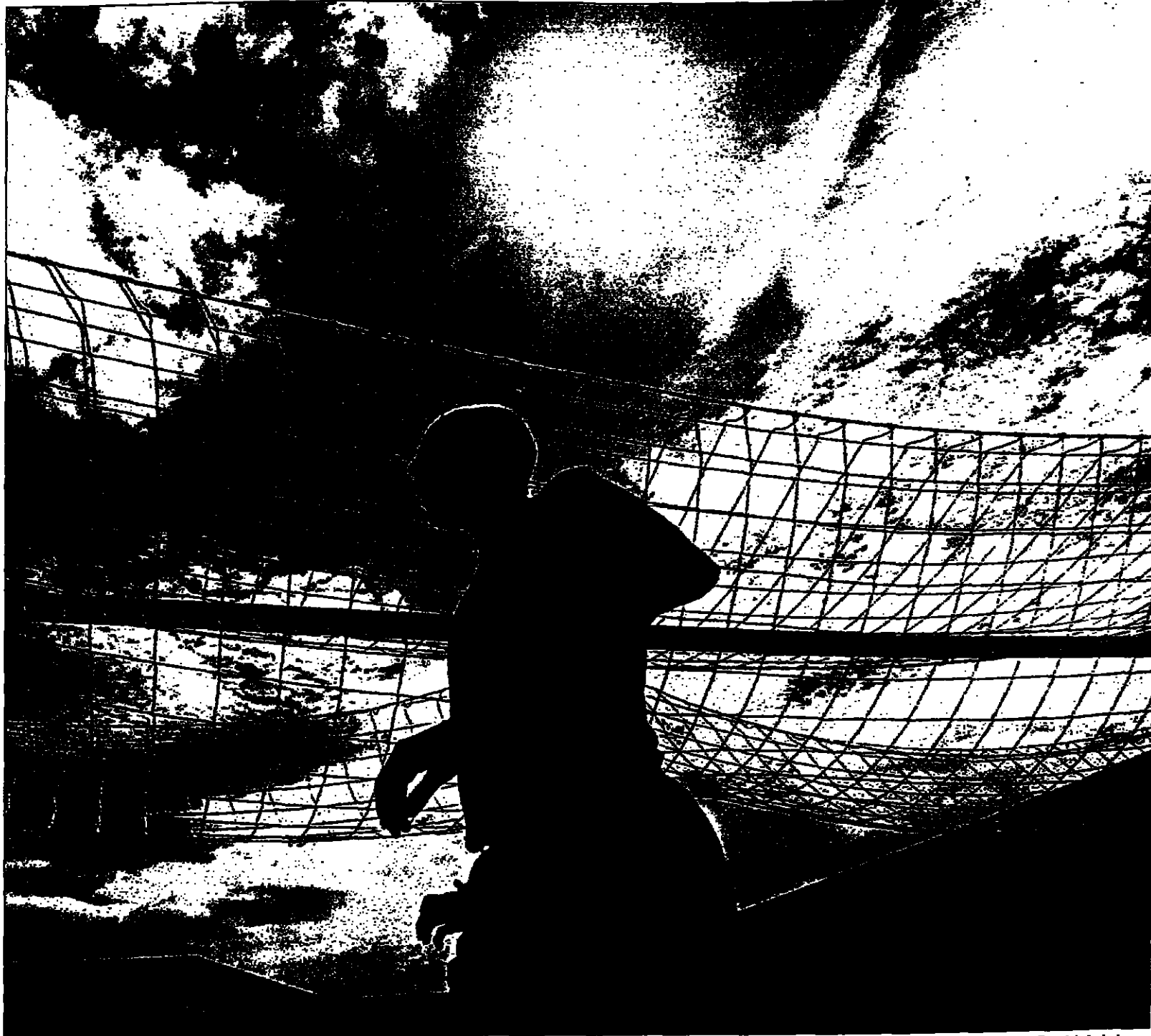
"My big target is to get to the finals and when Forest came in it was a chance to play in the Premiership. I explained to Guus Hiddink [the Dutch coach] that I wasn't playing. He didn't say it in so many words, but I needed to be playing."

With Forest struggling to stay up amid uncertainty over whether Stuart Pearce or Dave Bassett was actually manager, the words "frying pan" and "fire" sprung to mind. Van Hooijdonk netted once in nine games and his new team finished bottom.

Contrary to some perceptions, he neither had nor sought an escape clause. He had harboured a desire to play in England since he watched Tottenham win the FA Cup in 1981 on television before charging out in his Spurs shirt ("the Coq Sportif one") to kick a ball around.

"The game here is very open and honest, much better for strikers. In Italy the priority is not to lose. The climate and lifestyle of France or Spain appealed to me but this is the place to play."

Better than Scotland? "Football there is very fast," he says, searching for a diplomatic form of words, "but fast isn't always good." There was too much emphasis on gaining ground — "like rugby" — and it was unhealthy that two clubs might meet six or seven times in a season.



Pierre van Hooijdonk in training at Nottingham Forest's City Ground earlier this week

Photograph: David Ashdown

But isn't he the most British of Dutch players? "It annoys me when people say that," comes the retort, softened with a smile. "They see my height [6ft 4in] and stereotype me as a target man. I feel I'm more technical than that."

His volleying is, to take one example, stronger than his heading. The problem is persuading others to recognise it. "My first few weeks at Forest were the same as when I joined Celtic. My team-mates were hitting high balls. In fact I like to get involved in the build-up.

I get a similar sensation making a goal as scoring."

"Anyway, there's more to football here than the physical side. Who were the best players last season? Zola, Juninho and Beckham. Not big."

The extent to which Van Hooijdonk's self-analysis fits in with the requirements of Bassett, who is famous for ruthless football, will be revealing. As for the City Ground faithful, they must trust that he emulates another attacker with attitude, Stan Collymore, rather than Bryan Roy.

Both were to leave in acrimonious circumstances. But whereas Collymore's marksmanship took Forest back up in 1994, Roy flattered to deceive before flouncing off to Berlin deriding Nottingham as a cultural desert populated by narrow-minded people.

"It's too easy for people to bracket me with Bryan because we're both Dutch," Van Hooijdonk says. "I'm a different type of person. I'll make up my own mind. I believe that if you want to make something work, you will."

After life in the goldfish bowl of Glasgow (where a Celtic player once remarked that half the city hate you while the other half think they own you), Van Hooijdonk is hopeful that the gentler pace of the East Midlands can bring out the best in him.

The greater number of other "dark and tall men", as he puts it, has made it easier to blend in and enjoy a private life. When he and his first, less-than-serious girlfriend in Scotland split, the tabloids had wanted chapter and verse.

On the subject of fine detail,

Van Hooijdonk can reel off each of his eight internationals (four goals) and the number of minutes he played: 14 in Wales, 24 in Turkey and so on. Before his most recent cameo, 21 minutes in South Africa, the Dutch trained in searing heat only for the match to be staged in freezing temperatures.

The contrasts promise to be equally extreme as Van Hooijdonk alternates between Forest duty against the likes of Bury and Stockport and the World Cup. All the more so if his Parisian fantasy becomes a reality.

Fierce competition in the land of the fallen giants

The Premiership may have a claim, albeit tenuous given the dearth of genuine championship contenders, to being the best league in the world. Whether it will be as fiercely competitive as the First Division this season must be doubtful.

The Nationwide League's elite corps is, more than ever, a melting pot of fallen giants, desperate to get in on the television, ticket and merchandising bonanza of the top flight, and upstarts whose natural habitat has tended to be among the Torquays and Halifaxes.

In the circumstances, the promotion race ought to be a

carve-up between the haves. Recent history, in the shape of Bolton and Barnsley, and before them a cheaply constructed Sunderland, happily suggests that the have-nots, comparatively speaking, are in with a shout.

Like Bolton's romp to the title, the yo-yo fortunes of Crystal Palace and Leicester demonstrate that the demoted teams have a strong chance of being involved in the shake-up next spring. Encouraging as that may be to Middlesbrough, however, such clubs have usually held on to their best players.

Boro, having replaced Juninho with Paul Merson, may feel that a squad which reached two Wembley finals should be good enough to bounce back up. But uncertainty over the commitment of Fabrizio Ravanelli and other major earners casts a cloud over the Riverside which even David Platt's arrival might not dispel. Their exit might improve the dressing-room spirit; it would also leave Bryan Robson short of quality.

Sunderland, who retain most of the personnel Peter Reid led to the title 18 months ago, may be a better bet. Reid is still buying in dribts and drabs, but

FIRST DIVISION

there is more cohesive feel about them than with Boro. The fillip of playing in the new Stadium of Light should ensure no relegation hangover.

Nottingham Forest have been busy reinventing themselves under Dave Bassett. Stuart Pearce has gone, but enough of the younger mainstays remain to form the backbone of a side bolstered by some impressive recruitment at home and abroad.

Frank Clark, in charge at Forest until December, effected a heartening recovery at Manchester City. Georgi Kin-

kladze is still there, crucially, and in the likes of Lee Bradbury, Clark's goalscoring ex-quadrille from Portsmouth, the supporting cast looks considerably improved.

Pompey, meanwhile, are trusting in Terry Venables' Australian connections to offset such sales, a strategy with no obvious precedent for success. Wolves, too, have been conspicuous by their inactivity in the transfer market, with Steve Sedgley and Mixu Paatelainen the only buys.

The chest-beating of Wolves'

owner, Sir Jack Hayward, after their play-off defeat was understandable, if a trifle over the top. In the context of a staggering run of injuries, third place was commendable. Moreover, Mark McGhee did his best work on a tight budget at Reading.

Queen's Park Rangers have not only held on to Trevor Sinclair but acquired a proven 20-goal man, Mike Sheron, for £2.5m from Stoke. Rangers still look frail defensively, surprisingly for a side coached by Stewart Houston and Bruce Rioch, but should be fun to watch.

By bringing Brian Deane home from Leeds, Sheffield United found the ideal antidote to the gloom over Howard Kendall's walk-out. A sound managerial appointment — Lou Macari? — should find them pressing into the play-off zone again. It is less easy to be optimistic about Ipswich, where George Burley is again having to wheel and deal.

Nor do Birmingham appear any more likely to make the breakthrough. After the revolving-door policy of the Barry Fry era, Trevor Francis has not been able to bring in enough of the better-quality

players demanded by David Sullivan and his co-owners.

The chances of anyone doing a Barnsley must, in truth, be slender. Crewe and Port Vale espouse similar values but do not have the strength in depth. Stoke, who have a new manager in Chic Bates, a new ground and a useful replacement for Sherrin in Peter Thorne, from Swindon, may be a better bet.

Bradford City, where Chris Kamara rebuilt a prematurely promoted team just in time to stave off the drop in May, may also be a surprise packet if they can sustain the momentum.

Waddle's management test

Chris Waddle has long been tipped as management material. West Bromwich wanted him last year and Sheffield United toyed with the idea this summer, yet it is Burnley who have provided the platform for him to prove he has the organisational craft to complement his class and charisma.

Intriguingly, the former England, Tottenham and Middlesbrough maverick's first moves were to spend £275,000 on a midfield snapper, Leeds' Mark Ford, and decree that the object of football was "to stop the other team playing". Burnley, just out of the frame under Adrian Heath, will settle for a few compromised ideals if Waddle, who is to continue playing, can inspire them to promotion.

Their principal challengers are likely to include two Lancashire neighbours who have reached the Second Division by different routes. Oldham, who

were relegated, may be relying too heavily on Neil Warnock's reputation for getting sides up on a shoestring.

In contrast, promoted Wigan have the impetus, on and off the pitch, to maintain upward mobility. John Deehan's Third Division champions were outscored only by Bolton in the entire League. Graeme Jones bagged 33. He should thrive on the service from David Lee, an old-fashioned winger bought from Bolton, and the club's owner, Dave Whelan, is ready to bankroll further strengthening. Fresh finance, from that died-in-the-wool Hammerrsmiths Ender, Mohammad Al Rayed, also gives Fulham a fighting chance of emulating Bury's surge from Third to First. John Silleit, when manager of Coventry, famously pledged to "shop at

Harrod's" for players. It will be fascinating to observe whether the owner of the so-called top people's store allows Mickey Adams to do likewise.

The prospects for nearby Brentford hinge on who succeeds Dave Webb after this week's bizarrely timed resignation. The other play-off losers, Luton and Bristol City, look more likely to set the pace. They should be joined by relegated Grimsby, where Alan Buckley has something to prove after his stint at West Brom, plus £1.5m from the sale of John Ooster to Everton with which to do it.

Chesterfield came within 20 minutes of the FA Cup final in April. Such feats are often the springboard for League success but, far from building on them, John Duncan has lost his best players, Kevin Davies and Sean

Dyche, to Southampton and Bristol City respectively. Making the play-offs would be as great an achievement as reaching the semi-finals.

Blackpool, having had consecutive near-misses under different managers, should challenge again under the newly appointed Nigel Worthington. Preston have stabilised at the higher level and, like Burnley, can count on substantial support if they show signs of being in contention.

Millwall, where Billy Bonds has resurfaced as manager, need time to regroup after their near demise. They should have enough to avoid the dogfight at the bottom, which may be more than can be said for Bournemouth, Carlisle, York and Northampton. However, the way Bury mocked the bookies and pundits last season offers hope to all.

Even in the bottom section, where the 24 clubs have invested an average of £20,000 on players this summer, the word "potential" is recited like a mantra. Mark Hateley, the new player-manager of Hull City, is one of the few who can put his money where his mouth is.

Hull's status as the biggest English city never to have had a top-grade team is one of the game's tidiest clichés. Hateley, installed by a consortium headed by David Lloyd, Britain's tennis captain, will be the first incumbent in three decades with the financial clout to help the perennially toothless Tigers begin to address the anomaly.

The former England striker has made no drastic changes to a side who finished 17th, though he is promising to implement the progressive ideas absorbed under Arsène Wenger at Mon-

aco. The chequebook is poised, however, and the fact that Hateley has sounded out ex-Rangers colleagues Ally McCoist and Ian Durrant shows the scale of Hull's ambition.

And money is particularly persuasive at this level. Wigan, reputedly the highest payers in the lower divisions, came from 14th in 1996 to champions after a similar transformation.

The relatively smooth handover of power at Hull — not to mention Lloyd's plan to share a local rugby ground as the first step towards a new stadium — must have drawn envious glances in another large coastal conurbation. Scandalously, Brighton have squandered the momentum built up during their escape from the clutches of the Vauxhall Conference.

Their followers have en-

dured a summer of fear (over possible expulsion from the League) and loathing (towards Bill Archer, who inexplicably remains as chairman). With no new signings and home matches at Gillingham, a round trip of 140 miles, Steve Gritt must pull off an even greater achievement than survival if Brighton are to be anything but also-rans.

Jan Molby, whose Swansea side were beaten play-off finalists, also had his hands tied on transfers while waiting for a projected takeover. Having lost three stalwarts, he will do well to justify the Swans' status as joint favourites.

That distinction is shared by rivals Cardiff, another club who have traded on potential too long. The £85,000 spent on Bristol City's Kevin Nugent

and Swansea's David Penney should increase scoring power sufficiently to improve on last season's play-off failure.

The relegated trio of Notts County, Shrewsbury and Peterborough (where Barry Fry, amazingly, is £150,000 up on a mere 13 deals) are also equipped to challenge. Chester, who have bought back Gary Bennett, should be thereabouts, along with Leyton Orient, where Tommy Taylor has made some useful buys, and Lincoln, who may be pretty effective if not pretty under John Beck.

Sammy Mellroy's positive values should enable Macclesfield to prevent a lack of resources from sabotaging their inaugural campaign. In the danger zone, the usual suspects — Doncaster, Hartlepool, Darlington, Exeter and Torquay — are likely to be joined by Barnet and Mansfield.

United to screen home matches live at Bury

Manchester United have asked the Premier League's permission to beam live home matches to a big screen at Bury's Gigg Lane ground.

The Premiership champions are keen to give the thousands of supporters who cannot get tickets for games at their 55,000-capacity Old Trafford another option to see the action as it happens.

United have applied to the

Premier League for permission to screen their first five home games at Gigg Lane and if the deal is a success, they will look to extend it further.

"The plan is to set the screen up at one end of the ground and we estimate a maximum of 7,000 fans will be able to watch," United spokesman Ken Ramsden said.

"We have asked the Premier League for permission and we

hope there will be no objections. The only problem we can see is from clubs who are playing on the same day, but we would then ask why fans of other clubs would want to pay to watch us on a big screen at Gigg Lane."

"We are looking to set it up for our first five home games, beginning with Southampton next Wednesday. We will then review the situation and, if it proves to be a success, then we

may look to extend it further."

Reading have paid a club record fee of £800,000 for 24-year-old Brentford striker Carl Smith's spending on new players to £1.5m in 10 days following the signing of Linvoy Primus and Lee Hodges from Barnet. Asaba scored 26 goals in 67 appearances for Brentford and two in 12 games on loan at Colchester.

IT'S A ROLLOVER!

Draw date: 6/8/97. The winning numbers: 3, 5, 6, 20, 45, 49. Bonus number: 33.
Total Sales: £27,614,797. Prize Fund: £13,294,973 (45% of ticket sales plus £888,315 Superdraw funding).

CATEGORY	NO. OF WINNERS	AMOUNT FOR EACH WINNER	TOTAL EACH TIER
Match 6 (Jeepster)	0	£158,910	£0
Match 5 plus bonus ball	8	£2,407	£19,656
Match 5	330	£79	£26,130
Match 4	21,992	£10	£219,920
Match 3	448,111	£5	£2,240,555
TOTALS	470,441		£2,485,701

© Camelot Group plc. Players must be 16 or over. Bonus prizes rounded down to nearest £1. £10,000.

IT COULD BE YOU! THE NATIONAL LOTTERY

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Gunnell waves her final goodbye

Mike Rowbottom in Athens on the retirement of two great Britons

Sally Gunnell, Britain's most successful female athlete of all time, yesterday announced her retirement from the sport.

The 31-year-old British team captain, who pulled out of the World Championships here on Wednesday because of injury, took her decision during a phone call with her husband, Jon Bigg, on Wednesday night.

Her statement followed Tessa Sanderson's confirmation that, having failed to qualify for Saturday's javelin final, she was ending her career at the age of 41.

Thus, in the space of three hours, British athletics had said goodbye to two of its greatest female competitors.

Gunnell—who in 1994 held a grand slam of Olympic, world, Commonwealth and European titles—said she simply cannot face going on after three consecutive years of injury problems.

She was unable to defend her world 400 metres hurdles title in 1995, and was carried from the Olympic track in tears last year after breaking down in her semi-final.

"I always said after Atlanta, didn't I, that if I was injured any more I would call it a day. The luck had run out," she said yesterday, her left calf heavily strapped.

"When I spoke to Jon, I had made my mind up before I put down the phone. He's always said the decision was up to me and he would support me whatever I did. But I think he felt he couldn't go through it one more time."

"When I first told him I had got another injury, he was very frustrated. He was the one who was waiting, and saying he couldn't believe it had happened to me again."



Sally Gunnell announces her retirement yesterday: 'In some ways I feel a little bit of relief'

Photograph: Mike Egerton/Empics

Having won her opening 400m hurdles heat in 54.54sec, her best time of the year, Gunnell became aware of a problem in her left calf. "I thought as I walked off, 'What's going on here? I don't deserve this.'"

"In some ways now I feel a little bit of relief. Everyone has been asking me when I was going to call it a day, and I worried whether it would be obvious to me. But it was."

"I slept on my decision overnight because I wanted to make sure I wasn't going to turn

round in six months' time and say, 'Oh, my everybody, I'm going to come back.'"

"In the bar the other night, Steve Smith and Allison Curdshill and some of the others were saying, 'You can't retire. You've got to come with us to the Commonwealths and Europeans next year.'"

"If I'd done myself justice here, maybe I would have thought about it. But it's time to call it a day."

Gunnell hopes to be fit in time for farewell appearances

at Crystal Palace on 17 August and Gateshead on 7 September. After that, Gunnell will have other things on her mind. "The pressure's all on Jon now," she said with a grin. "He's got to support me and get me pregnant."

Unlike Linford Christie, she will not continue to compete in club athletics after putting an end to her international career.

"No," she said. "End of story. The thought of going out and doing another winter's training after this... I couldn't do it."

Sanderson was equally

adamant that she would not be tempted to prolong a career which has earned her Olympic and Commonwealth titles. The suggestion that she might try to improve on her record of being first British Olympian to appear in six Games brought a gust of laughter.

"That's it," she said. "That's the end of it."

Her effort of 57.84m missed qualifying by just three metres. "When I picked up the javelin for my last throw, I felt really choked, but I didn't want

to cry. When I saw the British supporters afterwards, and they were still saying well done and thanks for everything, that's when I felt tearful."

Her mood was altered when she was called for a routine doping test—the last of a 23-year international career. Characteristically, she was able to see the funny side.

"I thought, 'Give me a break. I'm 41 years old—where am I running to? Even when I sat on the toilet I was thinking, 'Here we go. One last dip.'"

Whitaker leads British triumph

Equestrianism

GENEVIEVE MURPHY reports from Dublin

John Whitaker led a clean sweep for Britain yesterday when he rode 18-year-old Virgil Village Grannusch to win the Kerrygold Classic on the second day of the Kerrygold Dublin Horse Show.

In a complete reversal of the form on Wednesday, when no British rider reached the jump-off, Whitaker was followed home by two compatriots: Robert Smith on Senator Trees Hanauer and Di Lampard on Abbervail Dream. Two others (Nick Skelton on Showtime and Geoff Bilington on It's Ono) jumped clear initially to finish eighth and 12th.

Grannusch, who was victor of both the Dublin and Calgary Grand Prix in 1994, has now won about £600,000 in his 10 years with Whitaker. The horse still gets wound up when competing, but he takes nothing out of himself in his stable or when

out in the field at home, being totally relaxed in both settings. Smith had been leading yesterday until Whitaker performed his familiar corner-shaving act to defeat him by 0.79sec, with Lampard a close third. Both Smith and Lampard are riding with extra confidence, having earned their places on the squad for this month's European Championships at Mannheim through the new series of team trials.

Smith won a junior team gold medal back in 1977 when he and his brother, Steven, were part of the winning quartet—but he is still waiting to ride on a senior championship team. His patience may well be rewarded at Mannheim, where the team of four will be chosen from the five squad members.

Leslie Burr-Howard of the United States prevented a second British monopoly of the prizes when she won the Kerrygold International on Ulane du Plessis, with Lampard on Flaminka and Whitaker on Randi in second and third.

Smith in the nick of time

Hockey

BILL COWILL reports from Harare South Africa England

Jane Smith's equaliser with just three seconds left here last night gave England a 4-4 draw with South Africa and took them closer to qualification for next year's World Cup.

England, having survived an initial South African onslaught, then took the game to South Africa.

Jane Smith set up England's first attack but it was Tina Cullen who provided England's opening goal in the 10th minute.

Three minutes later Smith struck at England's first penalty corner, but South Africa clawed their way back with two goals from Alison Darr.

On the stroke of half-time Smith put England ahead again after Mandy Davies had taken advantage of a rare South African error in defence.

In a thrilling second half South Africa equalised through Pietie Coetzee at a penalty corner and Coetzee then put the Springboks ahead with two minutes left.

England's comeback was led by Jane Smith, who scored twice in the final 10 minutes. The match was a tactical battle, with both teams looking to control the game's dynamics in return for the day-to-day running of the game.

Torrance and James fall short

Golf

Sam Torrance and Mark James, whose combined record is 15 Ryder Cup appearances, look certain to miss out at Valderrama next month as a new wave of younger men take over the stage.

Torrance, who will be 44 later this month, shot a disappointing level-par 71 in the first round of the Chernopoff Czech Open in Prague yesterday, when more than half of the 156-strong field had sub-par rounds, and complained bitterly about his putting.

James, who will be 44 in October, fared even worse with a 72 which left him eight shots behind the leader, Scott Henderson of Scotland, and struggling to make the half-way cut today.

While the two veterans struggled, the Spaniard Ignacio Garrido shot a five-under-par 66, and Irishmen Padraig Harrington and Darren Clarke both shot 69.

Clarke and Westwood are already assured of Ryder Cup places next month, but Torrance and James both need at least one victory to have a chance and time is running out.

Ivan Lendl, who won eight Grand Slam tournaments in a brilliant tennis career, shot a disastrous 82, the same score as he achieved in the Czech Open when he was played at Mariánské Lázně last year.

Naked ambition runs wild in the country

Australian Rules

Peter Schultz, player-coach of the Bungee country team in Victoria, has been trying hard to find the reason for his team's losing streak. He has not found it yet, but he has changed his training methods in a novel way: his team have been working out in the nude.

After a run of defeats Schultz made the team strip off in 2C weather. The player-coach had been disappointed after his fourth-placed team lost to fifth placed Hepburn.

"I was looking for a bit of inspiration," Schultz said. "It was a spur of the moment decision."

After the order to strip was given—except for boots and socks—the players did a lap of the ground and a 10-minute ball drill.

Schultz said the players were starting to enjoy themselves. "I actually had to tell them to get their gear back out," he said. "The only winner of the scene was the team's female trainer, who remained fully clothed while she took stock of proceedings from the sidelines."

"Something needed to be done to lift our spirits and liven up training," Schultz said. Sadly, the tactic failed. Hepburn lost its next game against top-of-the-table Hepburn.

Sailing

STUART ALEXANDER

Chris Law was incandescent with rage at the start of what was described as a short offshore race in the Admiral's Cup yesterday.

The skipper of Britain's big boat, Graham Walker's Corum Indulgence, was going for a spot at the start of the line, misjudged the angle and hooked his keel into the anchor line of the committee boat.

With the flooding tide pushing him harder on, it took over three minutes to disentangle and take four to recross the line, over a penalty turn and set off in pursuit of the other 20 yachts making up the seven, three-boat national teams, streaming more

on a strong tide than the three to five knot wind towards Portsmouth.

Indulgence came last as the defending champions, Italy, had a good day, pushing up to fourth overall and giving them a platform for success as the Fastnet assumes its usual decisive role. In the sort of light airs the Italians enjoy and which could continue over the weekend, they won both the big boat and 40ft classes in a race shortened to 36 miles. Unusually Britain have slumped from a high of second to unhappy sixth.

The United States still lead, chased by New Zealand. Relations between the two on the water are competitive, off it increasingly acrimonious. Disagreements over rule interpreta-

tions are leading to a situation more reminiscent of the last three America's Cups.

After much confusion, Tim Louis and Kit Hobday did everything's dream Cowes Week double by adding the New York Yacht Club Challenge Trophy to the Britannia Cup won the day before with their 41-footer Independent Bear. But unhappy were the AOD-bait sailors: for the fifth time in six days they had no a race.

A 5m bid by Sir Robin Knox-Johnston to establish a raft of 20 new records, including the Jules Verne round the world trophy which he held jointly with Sir Peter Blake on the 92ft catamaran Enza, was announced in Cowes yesterday. Sir Robin has the backing of

an engineering team from British Aerospace to work with designer Nigel Irens to plan the 120ft catamaran, which he hopes will also be a British entry in The Race, a non-stop round the world international event planned to start on 31 December 2000 in boats of unlimited size.

But Sir Robin needs to find the finance before he can start building. Mike Golding, however, is ready to let the contract for the new Open 60, to be designed by Finn and built by the JMV yard in Cherbourg. In a project costing £500,000 a year for four years Golding will take part in both the Around Alone race next year and the 2000 Vendée Globe singlehanded non-stop round the world race.

SPORTING DIGEST

RESULTS FROM WORLD ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS

<p>Women's semi-finals (Heat 4 in each heat to qualify; Heat 5 in each heat to qualify; Heat 6 in each heat to qualify; Heat 7 in each heat to qualify; Heat 8 in each heat to qualify; Heat 9 in each heat to qualify; Heat 10 in each heat to qualify; Heat 11 in each heat to qualify; Heat 12 in each heat to qualify; Heat 13 in each heat to qualify; Heat 14 in each heat to qualify; Heat 15 in each heat to qualify; Heat 16 in each heat to qualify; Heat 17 in each heat to qualify; Heat 18 in each heat to qualify; Heat 19 in each heat to qualify; Heat 20 in each heat to qualify; Heat 21 in each heat to qualify; Heat 22 in each heat to qualify; Heat 23 in each heat to qualify; Heat 24 in each heat to qualify; Heat 25 in each heat to qualify; Heat 26 in each heat to qualify; Heat 27 in each heat to qualify; Heat 28 in each heat to qualify; Heat 29 in each heat to qualify; Heat 30 in each heat to qualify; Heat 31 in each heat to qualify; Heat 32 in each heat to qualify; Heat 33 in each heat to qualify; 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